

Keith Campbell's

BOOK OF ADVENTURE



ARRANGE A
RENDEZVOUS
WITH
RAMA

LEARN
MR HOBBIT'S
SECRETS!

DOUBLE
HELPING
OF THE
HELPLINE!

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COMING NEXT MONTH!

If you're an Adventure addict then you won't want to miss the next issue of *Computer & Video Games*. Keith Campbell will be bringing you his regular Adventure feature — packed full with news and up to the minute reviews of all the latest games for your favourite machine, plus the essential Adventure Helpline — the page which solves all your Adventure problems at a glance.

PLUS: Keith and his team of apprentices have been wondering the corridors of a mysterious castle somewhere in the frozen north to bring you an exclusive report — all about the strange goings on behind the drawbridge!

Plus a second chance to enter our great Macbeth/Treasure Trap Competition. All in the April issue of C&VG — out on March 16th!



BOOK OF ADVENTURE II

Welcome to the second Book of Adventure! This is our chance to catch up on some of the things we would have liked to bring you in the past, but didn't have the space.

It's the time when we can (almost!) forget the number of pages available and pack in some of your interesting letters, catch up on a few missed reviews and bring you a couple of really in-depth features on some of the latest "biggies" from the States. Plus, of course, an extra generous helping of Helpline and reviews of the rest of the recent releases.

To make this also a handy reference book that every Adventurer will want to keep by him, we've included a collection of all the Adventure clues ever given in the Helpline to date and a complete index to the Adventure game reviews in C&VG from November 1981 to December 1984.

To bring you this feast of Adventure, the regular team are joined by two Adventurers whose names may be familiar to you. Steve Donoghue from *Geordie Country*, who came up with the suggestion of a Review Index, has been out getting us a special exclusive and taking a fresh look at some Scott Adams favourites. Jim Douglas, something of an expert BBC adventurer, has been pounding away at his keyboard in Twickers to cast some light on Acornsoft Adventures, including some of the very latest to be released.

We hope you enjoy the mixture!
Keith Campbell

RUNES CAST BY:

Keith Campbell, Paul Coppins, Simon Marsh, Jim Douglas, Steve Donoghue.

BREW MIXED BY:

Linda Freeman, Sylvia Wells.

CAULDRON STIRRED BY:

Mary Morton, Tim Metcalfe.

"FOUR COMPUTER BUFFS"

You've read all about the Adventure Helpline Database — now's your chance to see it in action! Keith Campbell, C&VG's Adventure Columnist, will be appearing, complete with computer and database, in a programme in Channe! 4's series *Four Computer Buffs*.

He will be demonstrating the database and explaining how it works and why it is useful. At the time of going to press, the date of the programme is uncertain, but it is likely to be screened on a Monday, at the end of February or beginning of March.

Open That Door!

Paul Coppins is stuck in front of a door that won't open! The trouble is, this door is no ordinary door — it is intelligent! It won't let him through unless he demonstrates that he too is intelligent!

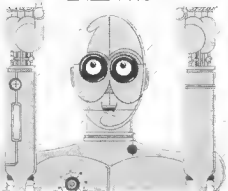
Not that Paul is backward, you understand — the trouble is that the door's idea of intelligence is to be able to hold the hole without the doughnut.

The name of the game? Paul is rapidly working his way through *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* from Infocom. After three days of playing, despite his computer lying to him, he only needs another 50 points out of 400 to complete the game. Lying? Paul has been trying exists described as available only to receive the reply "You can't go that way. I was lying!"

Infocom describe *Hitch Hiker's Guide*, written by Steve Meretzky of Planetfall fame in collaboration with author Douglas Adams, as the funniest title they've yet released.

At £34.50 HHG is not cheap, so before you rush out and buy one, make sure you read Paul's in-depth review in C&VG.

NEWS



AFTER SAGAS COME SAACS

Most people who want a copy can buy *Hulk* somewhere fairly local. But for many, *Hulk* has been their first taste of a Scott Adams Adventure and, having battered their brains over the puzzles, like lambs to the slaughter, come back for more!

The trouble is, the majority of shops stock only a couple of titles in a series, and the bigger stores are not awfully interested in selling Adventure games anyway. The Adventure mallab at C&VG is full of tales of woe from frustrated adventurers unable to get their next helping of frustration!

All that is about to change with the advent (pun intended!) of Scott Adams Adventure



Centres. Mike Wood, raffie at Adventure international UK is very excited about this new project.

The idea is to establish SAACs in selected stores. These will stock and display in a special display case, the whole range of Scott Adams Adventures in all versions. AI will supply the games, meaning that stores will not have to carry a vast stock. The advantage to the adventurer, of course, is that he will be able to visit a

SCOTT'S THIRD VISIT

Scott Adams is due to make his third visit to the UK in mid-February. Will he be bringing *Questprobe 3* over with him? Rest assured — it the Fantastic Four are around, Keith Campbell will be there to kidnap them! Watch for another C&VG exclusive — soon!

This time, Scott will be accompanied by his wife, Alexis. Alexis, of course, is famed for her part in *Pirate, Voodoo Castle* and *Mystery Fun House*, not to mention lending her name to a particularly savage hurricane!

Welcome to the UK, Alexis! We at C&VG hope you "have a nice stay!"

SAAC and be confident that the game he wants is available.

Aware that Adventure games from any source are not well-stocked in most stores, once the centres have been established Mike plans to invite other Adventure software houses to participate in the scheme, thereby offering a first class service to all Adventure fans.

Watch out for a Scott Adams Adventure Centre in your area — soon!

CLASSIC CONVERSIONS

Spinnaker Software in the USA, who produce the Trillium range of Adventure games (see *Rendezvous With Rama* review in this issue), are planning to launch *The Windham Classics* in the UK.

This Adventure series will feature such books as *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Wizard of Oz* and *Treasure Island*, and will be available initially for Apple and Commodore 64. Keith takes an in-depth look at *Swiss Family Robinson* in next month's Adventure column.

Further titles are planned, Lily Cremers of Spinnaker told me, including one using all-joystick control, especially for younger children.

The game currently under development and next due for release in the Trillium series is *Starman Jones* by Robert Heinlein. Meanwhile, Trillium is about to be renamed.

Watch out for more reviews in C&VG of games in these two new series!

ADVENTURE

Salem, Oh Great One!
The masochists strike
again! WHAM! I am
sending the enclosed tips
on *Mystery of Munroe*
Manor to save my fellow
Adventurers' sanity. This
game is unbelievably
frustrating — it drove us
mad! But we couldn't give
up, could we? It took 11
nights to complete!

We will buy King
Solomon's Mines by the
same company — now say
I'm not mad! For dessert I
eat razor blades — and you
can believe it too! Know of
any NORMAL Adventures?

Thanks for the great
read. Must close now
Have to strip my legs, one
hair at a time. Ooh I love
the pain!

Gabby Smith
Wincham

Keith: May I recommend
the ZARK decology,
Gabby? I'm sure it would
be right up your street!

Dear Keith,
Whilst innocently
adventuring in the Science
Museum in London, my
friend, Tom Hame, and I
came across a rather large
spherical "boulder" in a
display. Upon EXAMINING
this "boulder" we found it
had the legend "Y2"
carved upon it.

We tried TAKE
BOULDER but were
thwarted by a glass screen.
Undeterred, we tried
whispering PLUGH and
even PLOVER in the hope
that we would find
ourselves transported back
to our little brick building
beside the road. But our
efforts were in vain. All we
got for our troubles was an
odd stare or two from the
non-Colossal-playing
museum attendants.

In fact, the mysterious
spherical Y2 object turned
out to be a poly-propylene
"dig" (so the nearby card
told us) used in gas
pipelines. Does anyone
know of any other
distinctly Adventure-type
objects which have
cropped up in the "real"
world?

Stefan Fafinska
Reading

Dear Keith,
I would like to have a good
moan about an increasing
trend from software houses
to abolish the HELP
command. In a sticky
situation a well-placed
response to a plea for help



FROM OUR POSTBAG

Many of the letters Keith, Simon and Paul
receive are read with great interest and
amusement. Usually they can only be
mentioned briefly in passing. However
here, with more space to spare, is a
selection to help, amuse and entertain! We
give no guarantee whatsoever that using
some of these tips will improve your
Adventure performance!

can make the difference
between success and
failure. Some games fail to
recognise HELP and others
give useless comments
such as "Try drawing a
map" or "Examine things
closely".

Given the choice of a
cryptic clue in the game,
and a hint sheet that takes
about 10 days to arrive, I
know which I would
choose! I could always
stuck, anyhow!

Geoff Davis
Bridgewater

Keith: What do other
adventurers think about
lack of in-built help?

Dear Keith,
"At last," I thought, as I
saw *The Hulk* on my local
computer shop shelf.
Finally I'd found a Scott
Adams game for my
Spectrum. Hardly had a cry
of joy passed my lips than
£10 changed hands, I
rushed home and the
much-awaited program was
loading.

There then followed
hours of dome fuzz dome
fuzz room death! Then
things started to come right
and eventually I completed
the whole thing — I was so
happy I could have sung
an aria!

The point is, though, that
after having waited some
17 months for a Scott
Adams game I was a little
disappointed. The main
reason was the lack of
locations — ignoring
lookalikes, I make it only
six. It is just SMALL!

There's no doubt that the
problems are a cut above
the usual. Scott's use of
logic belies the difficulty of
the situations. But on the
other hand, what is so
stunningly original about
digging every bit of earth
to find gems? The anti-man
was pretty predictable too.
However, the ants
themselves and the bio-
gem/egg problems were
touches of brilliance!
I know it will make me
horribly unpopular, but the
truth must out. Is Scott
Adams resting on his
laurels? I've recently
played and completed
Adventureland which is
ace — little wonder this set
off such a remarkable
career.

I've no doubt you're
feeling somewhat
displeased with me for
knocking your hero but,
before you file this letter in
the circular filing cabinet at
the foot of your desk, could
I ask a favour?

How, oh how, do you get

into Basil's safe without
being shot at?

Anthony Smith
Haverfordwest

Keith: I've heard a rumour
that the safe can be
opened at the dead of
night. Anthony, No, I'm
not going to file this, as
you suggest — I'm going
to send you a T-shirt for
an interesting and
controversial letter! And
then I'm coming round to
your place to beat you to a
pulp!

Dear Keith,
First can I compliment you
on producing the best
Adventure column? I only
wish there were even more
pages!

I have a BBC B computer
and have been unable to
print the character like two
full-stops in mud-arr in the
"cheating on Snowball"
listing. Can you explain
how I can print it?
Norman Wilkinson
Scartho
Grimsby

Keith: You can't, Norman.
A typographical error, I'm
afraid! It should have
been two double quotes
separated by a space! I
would reprint the line
here, but that might be
tempting fate! And as for
the extra page — funny
you should say that ...!

Creetings, O Master
Advertiser,
The H key keeps falling off
my Beeb! It must be all
those Adventures I play —
arcade games NEVER use
H!

Here is a *Snowball* bug
Once you have mended
the Snowdoser, you can re-
enter it and start it again!
Talking of bugs, one of the
people at our local
computer store discovered
an ace *Sherlock* bug! He
went to someone's front
gate and got this YOU

CAN SEE AN
UNCONSCIOUS
POLICEMAN AN
UNCONSCIOUS
POLICEMAN SAYS: "I'M
SORRY SIR, I HAVE MY
ORDERS, NO ONE IS TO
GET BY". I've heard of the
police having the last
word, but this is ridiculous!

Have you seen the
current hi-score for BBC
Chuckie Egg? 128 million!
By my estimate, that would
take 10 days to achieve.
Who would sit down and
play *Chuckie Egg* for 10
days running (and would

the Beeb stand the strain? That's what I like about Adventures, nobody sends in false claims like "If you type DAYTONA in Snowball, the Waldroid appears and kills you!"

By the way, Zark isn't a trilogy. It's currently (ha!) in 10 parts, one of which contains two Adventures. Zark 10 (yippees!) is called *Interface Adventure*. The plot will be kept secret, because it is TOTALLY original (and VERY silly). OK, just one bit of the plot, then. You own JUST a BBC B and black and white TV. You must attain the highest status possible by upgrading your system with disc drives and printers etc. making sure your H key doesn't fall off. Yours madly
The Waldroid of Firetop Mountain
John Yeates (total loony)
Keith: (Gulp!) I won't ave a ope in ell of solving it, John! Tanks for writing again! (and again and again and again).

Dear Keith,
I am writing to inform you that I have recently completed *The Hulk*. I found it very enjoyable and also rather frustrating in places. Together with the excellent graphics and a fast response, it must rate among the best Adventures on the market.
Wayne Hazell (age 14)
Cliffe
Nr Rochester

Dear Keith,
I thought I ought to write to you to give a few hints on some Adventures and ask for help.

At the moment I'm trying to solve Level 9's *Dungeon Adventure*. I bought *Dungeon Adventure* after your review. You have a lot to answer for with this one!

I get stuck in so many different places, but one thing you could help me with is how to get a permanent source of light. I have the helmet with the lamp but cannot find the wick (if there is one). I have no wish to be forever doomed to wander through *Dungeon* without a light and that particularly bothers me. What kind of Adventurer am I if I cannot find the most basic thing any Adventurer needs?

Carry on the good work. I have noticed that now,

after three years, quite a few other magazines have decided to cater for Adventurers. Alas, none can compare with your column. They are but pale imitations of the one true light!

Paul Hurditch
Rotherham

Keith: Thanks for the compliment, Paul, and also to all the many other Adventurers who write to say nice things about my column!

What your lamp needs is the (ignisfatus) (OK lads — dictionaries out)!

Dear Keith,

Yes, I've just read it, how could I miss it? I read it every month (doesn't it make you feel good?) An' a thought to myself "Wot the hell! So I rushed to my hifi and spun "I feel for you" on the spinny thing and remote controlled it going. This is true! Did it help? No! It just made me feel more angry! I will explain...

You spent nearly a whole page explaining to us all out here who ask (and sometimes tell) that we don't "get" your hesitant clues

Look Keith, we already know, just explain them a little more.

Mainly it's about *The Hulk*. Please help, please, please, please etc. I got it weeks ago and the iron ring, fuzzy area, ants, egg and room you can't get out of, for some reason, completely baffle me. Then I read you going on about taking Dr. Strangus

literally, and ants being helpful. The only thing they help me do is go back to the dome — the beginning. And then you mentioned the fuzzy area — Move, Examine, Move, Examine

And another thing! You talk about Scott Adams games being classics. Do you get these from specialist shops? I live right next to the centre of Manchester and all I see in the biggest indoor shopping centre in Europe is all the "newy" ones and none of the other

The record's finished now, so I'll have to go. More hints and keep up the gossip — I love that!
Michael Goldstron
Eccles, Manchester

Keith: If I gave all the answers outright, it would take that essential element of mystery out of Adventures!

I aim to help you by making you think! Besides, Scott would never speak to me again if I printed a complete solution to his games!

I could, believe me — and some have! I think that amounts to killing a game stone dead and rips off the author's work. The puzzles are there to be solved! Besides, it's Scott's turn to buy the wine, next time he comes over!

Adventure International are setting up special Scott Adams Adventure centres at selected stores — perhaps there will be one near you in Manchester, Michael.

Dear Keith,

After reading your top ten adventures of 1984 in the C&VG Yearbook, I rushed out and bought *Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle*. When I loaded it, all that appeared were three little words! USE DEFAULT COLOURS?

Please could you tell me if this is some plot to stop piracy, part of the program, or have I got a faulty copy?

Richard Jones

Compare,

Rhonda

Keith: It's part of the program, Richard. The text colours provided are white on grey, but if this doesn't suit you or your TV set, then you can change them to any combination you want by answering 'NO'. You will then get a selection list from which to choose. A thoughtful touch, no?

Dear Keith,

Thank you very much for your mention in the January issue of C&VG. I am pleased to say that I am getting over my operations, and have been able to dust off the Spectrum and resume *Adventure*.

In fact, when I came out of hospital I went rather mad and bought up over a dozen new Adventures. There seemed to be rather a lot issued in the past month or so! Looking back, I feel this was perhaps a mistake, for each time I get stuck, instead of working on the problem, I put the game to one side and start a new one! Result — a few partially finished games but few actually completed.

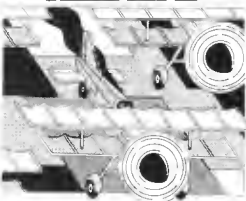
Alf Baldwin

Tuffley,

Gloucester

Keith! Glad to hear the news, Alf, and thanks a lot for the solutions! We at C&VG hope that *Adventuring* during convalescence builds up your 'strength points'. Your letter has certainly opened my eyes to what a wonderful asset a computer and a few Adventure games are when you've a bit of time on your hands! A t-shirt is on its way to you!

• HELPLINE •



Who is the man who put graphic Adventures on the map? Who was the first person to translate Tolkien's classic story, *The Hobbit*, into a computer game and then went on to

PHILIP MITCHELL

make ace sleuth Sherlock Holmes the star of a controversial Adventure? Find out here as Keith Campbell delves into the world of the top programmer from down under

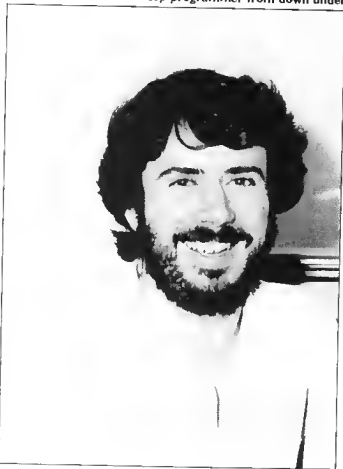
If you mention the games *Hobbit* and *Sherlock*, the name Melbourne House will probably spring to mind, conveying the anonymous and somewhat impersonal picture of a corporate body. Melbourne House is a far cry from that image, being a small firm of friendly people like Fred, Naomi and Paula, and behind those classic games is a name that is probably least known among authors of great Adventure games — Philip Mitchell.

Perhaps it is not surprising that Philip's name keeps a low profile, for Philip himself is a quietly spoken, unassuming man from Melbourne in Australia. He is the leading light of Beam Software, an independent company that writes programs for Melbourne House.

Philip started off on the road to his present success some eight or nine years ago, building small micros at school, based on the old 8080 processor. He went on to obtain a degree in electronics and computer science at the University of Melbourne.

It is strange, isn't it, that a game based on Sherlock Holmes should be regarded as almost a sequel to a game based on such a different theme as the *Hobbit*. Yet so highly regarded was *Hobbit* that nearly everyone who had played it impatiently awaited the next release from the same stable. The degree of *Hobbit*'s success is a closely guarded secret, but I estimate it to be in the range 100,000 to 200,000 copies — that's sold, not pirated!

I talked to Philip about *Sherlock* and asked him which game he had enjoyed writing the most. Without hesitation, he came down firmly in





favour of *Hobbit*. "Hobbit took about 18 months to write, with three or four programmers starting on it. I was the only programmer on the project during the last six months and so the whole game took about two and a half man-years to produce. But the point was, it had not been announced. Nobody was expecting it, let alone waiting for it, so the pressure to complete it was far less."

"How long did *Sherlock* take?" I asked. "Sherlock took 18 months from start to finish and I was the sole programmer," answered Philip, but he was quick to add that the storyline was written by a lady by the name of

pletely fill the available space, and give you an out of memory error!"

On the subject of Watson, I couldn't resist mentioning the fact that he had the most annoying habit of sitting in the same armchair as Holmes, even to the extent of following him around from chair to chair! Was this a *Sherlock*-bug?

Philip, who admits to a number of known and unknown bugs in the game, denied this one! "Students of Conan Doyle have recently formed the opinion that Watson was gay," he explained seriously, "and since this game is designed to make the characters behave realistically, it is performing as planned!" He was smiling as he said this, but I couldn't quite make out whether or not his tongue was in his cheek!

My own opinion of *Sherlock* was that it could have been made more user-friendly without the graphics and written preferably as a disc-based game. Philip agreed about the graphics, and had, in fact, argued that there should not be any, to give him the extra memory he needed to enhance the English. However, the boss had insisted, so the boss got graphics.

Talking of graphics, what about the grand piano that is described in the text as an upright? "By the time we noticed that, the boxes had been printed and it was too late to do anything about it," replied Philip. "But we managed to take it out of the game."

The disc question was another matter. The problem was that the UK did not have a big enough market in disc software to support the sales required for a game with development costs on the scale of *Sherlock*. However, *Sherlock* as it exists at present, said Philip, is only a subset

of the whole story on which it was based. If adapted for disc, it could have many other sub-plots added, making it very complex, rather than just extremely difficult, to solve. Philip looks forward to the development of the next generation of cheap popular machines which he foresees will have small drives built into them.

Does someone like Philip Mitchell get any spare time to himself, I wondered? "Not much lately!" he grinned. But when he does, he likes to spend it in Victoria, driving and skiing. He once took up parachuting, but this pastime was short-lived — he found he didn't like flying around in planes.

"With all the pressures of programming top games, have you found enough time to get married yet?" I asked. "I'm not married, but I did come close to it!" he laughed, ruefully. "You can certainly put me down as 'available!'"

Philip was just about to embark on a well-earned month's holiday in Europe when we met and, unless he had a whirlwind holiday romance, such thoughts will probably have to be shelved until after Philip's next project. For when he beams back to Beam Software, he is likely to start in on *Lord of the Rings*. The Adventure rights were just being finalised at the time we spoke — and Philip anticipated modestly that it would take "quite a while" to write. He envisages a suite of three programs to do justice to the subject.

"Hobbit was advanced for its time," claims Philip, "but the whole game concept is being rethought for *Lord of the Rings* — it needs to be much better." With Philip Mitchell behind it, I feel confident that it will be, for he strikes me as someone constantly striving for improvement in the large scale miracles he performs in small amounts of RAM.

NAME: Philip Mitchell

GAMES: The Hobbit, Mugsy, Penetrator, Sherlock Holmes.

BORN: Melbourne, 1961

Veronica and it was her plot that he had adapted for the game.

I asked what problems he had encountered in writing *Sherlock*. "Well, Watson was a bit of a problem. When the game was just about playable, Watson turned out to be far too clever. After all, he was always reckoned to be fairly dense and so I had to remove a lot of the intelligence from his character."

"So he is now virtually useless to Holmes?" I asked. "Oh, not far from it — the more you talk to Watson, the more he learns and so he becomes quite useful! There is one thing I would warn people about, though. Because he is the one character who learns during the game, his character continues progressively to consume more memory in the computer. So don't talk to him TOO much — or Watson's knowledge could com-



COMMANDER'S HANDBOOK

As might be expected of high quality American software, the packaging of *Rama* is superb. A cardboard sleeve that slips nicely onto a bookshelf unfolds to show a large picture of the bridge of *Endevor* as it approaches *Rama*. Unfolding it again reveals a magnificent panorama measuring some 32 inches by 10 inches of the inside of *Rama*. Tucked into pockets at each end of the open pack are two diskettes, a *Commander's Handbook* and a draughtsman's cross-section of *Rama* and of the spaceship *Endevor* (Arthur C. used the English spelling — what an annoying trait the Americans have of trying to change the English language!). There's also some top secret messages in code.

On loading the program, you might be forgiven for thinking you've left the aerial plugged into the TV set. It's as if you are starting to watch a film! The opening sequences are sheer entertainment. Multi-channel theme music issues forth and if ever *Rama* is filmed, I guess this music would be used, it is so atmospheric and catchy.

An illustrated title is shown, followed by credits for the production of the game. There follows a narrative introduction of the scenario — "Imagine ..." — with the music continuing throughout.

As the Adventure game starts, a mass of text, only seen before in Infocom games, accompanies a graphic illustration of each location.

So far, so good. But how impressive is it?

A comparison with Infocom games is inevitable. Excellent though this game is, I think Trilbium have a few things to learn yet.

For the text *Adventurer* there is a graphics OFF switch, so the text fan can't complain of game degradation due to the memory used by the graphics, since the whole game takes two double sided diskettes which are constantly being accessed. Some of the graphics are good, but most only passable. Nevertheless, I found I wanted to keep them on, so that I could quickly recognise where I was. The most dis-

appointing feature about them, perhaps, is that they do not interact with the game.

The text tends to be a little humourless. *Rama* is not exactly a humorous story, but the game narrative has a slightly cold touch. On the other hand, it is dramatic and succeeds, in the main, in conveying the feeling of what it might be like to explore a strange body such as *Rama*.

There is a mass of detail and only playing the game for weeks on end will reveal how deep it goes, by way of actions that are possible and locations that can be explored.

The vocabulary is listed in the *Handbook* and, although my mutual reaction was one of disdain, I found that because of the way the game played it was a positive help and saved hours of synonym-bashing. Unfortunately,

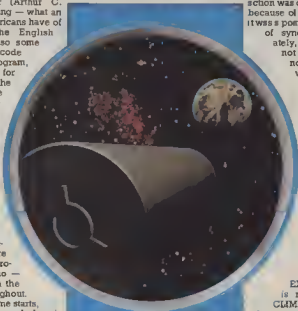
some of the replies are not very user-friendly — notably the unrecognised-word reply: "You reconsider your words."

That phrase crops up time and again. With multi-word sentences, it sometimes appears even when all the words used are valid according to the vocab. list.

Some of the logic leaves a bit to be desired. A typical example of this occurs in a fenced area. You cross one fence and then decide to look around: CLIMB FENCE. "You climb the fence with no problem."

EXAMINE FENCE. "There is nothing like that here."

CLIMB FENCE. "The inner fence or the outer fence?" Now I've never been able to catch Infocom out like that, but on the other



Some years ago I borrowed a book from the public library which was to remain absent from the shelves for some considerable time. Reading it just once was not enough!

Rendezvous With Rama tells of an asteroid, discovered hurtling through the solar system and apparently destined to turn around the sun and eventually depart. It is given the code name *Rama*. As it approaches, observations reveal some strange facts. It rotates once every four minutes, is perfectly cylindrical

and is hollow. It cannot therefore be a natural body!

The story is concerned with man's landing on this 50k long cylinder and the subsequent exploration of its interior. *Rama* has some mind bending features but, as the exploration progresses, all is explained in convincing scientific and engineering detail.

Rendezvous With Rama is no cowboy type science fiction — everything has a purpose relating to the known laws of physics.

As such, the reader with a

scientific bent is consistently striving for answers to the strange phenomena. It is almost like a sci-fi "whodunnit", or rather "whatsitdo"?

When I heard that the book had been turned into an Adventure game in collaboration with its author, Arthur C. Clarke, I could hardly wait to get my hands on it. Thanks to Lily Cremarsh of Spinnaker Software in Cambridge, MA, a copy was soon winging its way to me across the Atlantic, in advance of its release in the UK.

hand, my dear Watson...

There are more shortcomings in the logic. For example, the spacesuit, once worn, cannot be removed. The plot might not suffer, but one doesn't expect that sort of constraint in Adventures of this ilk.

On the Commodore version that I played, the disc delays, of course, are tiresome but the volume of text tends to make participation time a reasonable percentage of waiting time. One very annoying feature, though (and I don't know whether or not this happens on all versions) is the arcade section.

Don't get me wrong. One of the

drive and enduring a wait of some few minutes, before I could continue to make more attempts. Perhaps this is a deliberate ploy — if so, then the authors didn't make fair allowance for the Commodore disc loading speed!

There is no way I could have completed my exploration of Rama before bringing you this report on it. The overall feeling I have is one of magnitude and I feel it must be possible to complete the Adventure without exploring every facet of this mysterious world.

Reading the book (which is not supplied) will, in this case, be an

Trillium Corporation. It is available for the Commodore 64 and Apple II series, priced £19.95, and the book is published by Pan Books at £1.95.

It is easy to pick holes in any game, especially one so vast. Overall, I give Rama a high rating — it is an excellent game.

EXPLORATION OF RAMA

Captain's Log:

I was roused from my bunk by two short tones on the intercom. It was Will, my technical officer. No peace



arcade sequences represents the real meaning of the term Arcade Adventure. You have to discover for yourself how to dock with Rama. Believe it or not, without words and purely with joystick control, you have to use logic. This is one of the most innovative ideas I have yet seen in an Adventure game.

What peeved me was the fact that after a few unsuccessful attempts, I had to pay a real penalty by swapping diskettes in and out of the

advantage and add to the game's enjoyment. For, although very similar in a lot of respects, the book takes you where the author wanted you to go. The game is played in your own time and you can, within reason, wander around Rama at will, discovering things that are not touched on in the book. And there is a surprising ending, so don't think you know it all before you start playing!

Rendezvous With Rama is from the

for the wicked! Endeavor had neared its goal, almost certainly an alien spacecraft of mind-boggling proportions — some 50 kilometres in length. Docking with it was of the utmost priority. I leapt from my bunk and made for the bridge.

Adventurer's Diary:

The experienced Adventurer has a tendency to explore all newly discovered locations as he comes across them. Was I wasting time find-

ing my way around the Endeavor and trying to operate the many control systems within? There was certainly plenty to see, but I finally decided that the home ground, as it were, was best left till later and I had better get on with the job in hand, or the crew would be getting impatient.

Captain's Log:

Laurs, Pieter and Will are all on the bridge, looking excitedly at the screen. We are directly confronting one of the huge circular end faces of Rama, the name given to this strange visitor to the solar system. We are calling this end of the cylinder the North Pole from now on. I ask Will to carry out a docking manoeuvre. As usual, in tricky situations like this, Will demurs and hands the controls to me.

With the ship on manual control, I wrestle to bring her to a safe berth on Rama. It is not long before I begin to wish I had spent more time on those early arcade games — landing on Rama seems to require similar skills!

Adventurer's Diary:

Never thought I'd be reduced to using a joystick in an Adventure — this is a bit much! Luckily I had to get one for those "scrolling 3D" monstrosities I looked at a little while ago! Oh well, s'pose I'd better plug the thing in!

Captain's Log:

There seems to be a lot of meteorites around. They make no impression on Rama, but Endeavor wouldn't have

This is where I got stuck. I brought the Endeavor through the rubble to the face of Rama and nothing happened, except I got zapped many a time and then had to reload the arcade section and start over from scratch. After a while, this began to get me down and I searched the Commander's Handbook in vain for detailed instructions on how to dock. Load, reload, reload. I almost gave up!

But then I thought I noticed something significant even as I tailed once more. "This is an Adventure game..." I thought and tried out my theory. It worked first time! An arcade game with a built-in Adventure type puzzle! Brilliant, I take back all I said about joysticks!

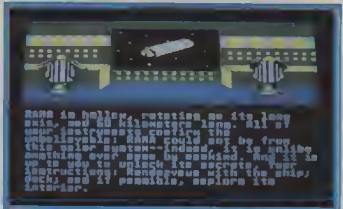
using counterclockwise instead of anticlockwise.

Captain's Log:

I got in! A lot of good that does — for I am up against an alien airlock and strongly suspect that whatever creatures may be inside will be very unlike the human race. The airlock is triangular, with a control button at each apex. Pressing them just doesn't seem to work. I return to the Endeavor for some help.

Adventurer's Diary:

I can't seem to get anyone to help. The crew appear sullen — perhaps they are working to rule! Or have I upset them? What now? After all, I'm supposed to be Captain, but they just



Screens from *Rendezvous with Rama* based

won't take my orders. I guess I'd better buy the book and refresh my memory — perhaps I'm doing it all wrong.

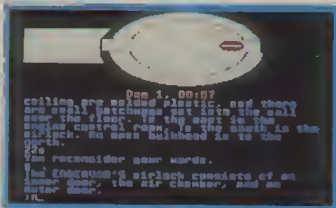
Adventurer's Diary:

I've just forked out nearly a couple of quid for the paperback and I'm glad. About time I had a good read instead of a write and Rama is an absorbing book. The story comes back fresh — I had forgotten so much of the detail. I'm making careful notes, thinking I might be glad of the information later on. It seems I've got to do this stunt myself, in person as it were, before long.

Adventurer's Diary:

Shock, horror — no triangular door mentioned in the book! What shall I do now? I wander off to the monkey house to see if I can persuade a Simp to tag along. Alas, their programming doesn't seem to allow for this.

After a bit of examining things and head scratching, I manage to find help. I head through the airlock again — funny, I have forgotten the commands and must learn them all over again. "Follow airlock procedure." I am sternly told.



much of a chance if hit. After a few near misses, I am now nearing the North Pole.

A bit of quick thinking here as I adjust our spin and attitude to that of Rama's, and we've docked! A cheer goes up from the crew — or was I just imagining it?

Adventurer's Diary:

What a pain these arcade games are!

Captain's Log:

I have been through the airlock and have stepped onto the surface of Rama. It is an awesome sight. I see what may be a way into the vast cylinder.

Adventurer's Diary:

After some difficulty with the REC language, Trillium's version of "American", I realise that I should be

Strange procedure they have here — I didn't even have to evacuate the air before I opened the outer door. I quite expected to get blown clean into space with the outburst after that dire warning, but nothing special happened, as they say!

Captain's Log:

I'm now inside Rama and have reached the Hub — the internal centre of the North Pole of this strange world.

Adventurer's Diary:

Time to Save Game, I think, and pause for thought awhile.

Captain's Log:

After descending to the plain of the

... (deleted by the official historians)

Captain's Log:

I'm in a strange room, with a platform and a dome. The dome is radiating light and is translucent. The platform seems insurmountable for the moment. Wait, there's something here! Wonder where I can use that — perhaps I need a computer?

Adventurer's Diary:

The worst has happened! DOWN. "You mean you want to climb down?" YES. "You reconsider your words."

Captain's Log:

After starting the flight back from,

craft, cut off as it is, by the sea and the immense southern cliff. It has many secrets to divulge. The Ramans had not reckoned on the Dragonfly! But perhaps they could be forgiven for not taking into account man's preoccupation with apparently useless gadgets.

I'm heading north now, but have lost track of my position relative to Hub base. This is due to loss of radio contact — something seems to be jamming us.

I hope I'm making for the Cylindrical Sea. En route, I've come across some very strange columns and a flower!

Things at this end are very different from up north and I can't resist the urge to deviate from my south-north path, to see what Rama is all about.

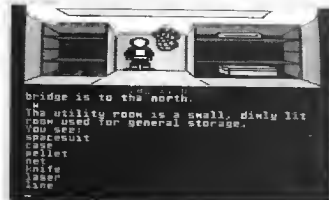
I am finally approaching the cliff edge. Let's hope there's a rescue party from the Endeavor waiting for me. And let's hope they've come up with some lateral thinking to get me down that cliff and across the Cylindrical Sea!

Adventurer's Diary:

This is going all wrong! It was never supposed to have happened this way! Where's that makeshift boat and why can't I take my shirt off? Help! Now I've got into a REAL Adventure problem!

Historian's Note:

The second volume of Captain Norton's log was never recovered, presumed lost in the murky depths of the Cylindrical Sea of Rama.



on Arthur C. Clarke's novel of the same name.

northern hemisphere, I've been doing a bit of reconnaissance and find that Rama does not give up its secrets too easily! The buildings of London won't let me in, but taking a peek through the roofs is quite interesting. I want to cross the Cylindrical Sea, but can't see any way to climb that 500 metre cliff on the other side!

Adventurer's Diary:

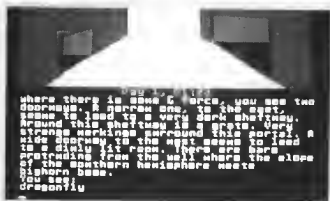
It seems a bit premature to use Dragonfly, as conditions are not yet those described in the book. But I see no advantage in hanging around here! Anyway, I'm curious! So out with the dreaded joystick again, I suppose!

Wow, were there really flying boulders inside Rama? But without things to dodge, what would make an arcade game tick?

Captain's Log:

Today I have flown to the South Pole! It was not too difficult a journey and I came to a safe landing near Bighorn.

Here I found something very different from the story that I suspect the historian will write. There were



Bighorn, a violent lightning discharge sent Dragonfly spiralling to the ground. She is now a wreck. I am thus marooned in the southern hemisphere, cut off by the Cylindrical Sea, which forms a band between myself and the airlock at the Hub.

Now the action really starts! The southern hemisphere was obviously thought to be impenetrable by the curious occupants of visiting space-

Editor's Note:

This ends the last copy we ever received from Keith. We believe he was bribed or detained to prevent him from leaking the full facts about the Rama expedition!

Next month we introduce our new Adventure feature, written by The White Wizard's Dorkslaying Grand Elf called Alice.

REVIEWS INDEX

Here it is! A complete list of adventures reviewed in C&VG from the year dot to December last year!

We have added the page number after the date of the issue to help you find them. If there is an * before it,

then it means that the review is in a separately page numbered supplement accompanying the issue.

It certainly that C&VG is THE magazine for Adventure players.

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IS ADVENTURE DAMAGING YOUR HEALTH?

A major new book of enormous interest to all Adventurers has just been released. The author reveals a frightening trend in mental disease amongst

many Adventure players.

In yet another *C&VG* exclusive, Keith Campbell brings you the first ever review of this book and Steven

Donoghue, who managed to get hold of a pre-publication copy of the proofs, presents some fascinating extracts that should serve as a warning.

A medical book, aimed at both potential and experienced Adventure players alike, has recently been released in paperback form, with, believe it or not, the home micro owner in mind, rather than the medical profession.

A well illustrated and very readable book, *Medical Journal of Adventure Related Diseases* (Pricourt Books, £5.95) is written without any of that technical jargon so often found in works of this nature. In a well researched introduction, the author, K W Ack, outlines the potential hazards faced by Adventurers and then continues with an in-depth analysis of many symptoms which may be detected at the onset of an Adventure disease.

He ends with some help for sufferers, by giving sound advice on how to alleviate the effects, but holds out little hope of an early breakthrough in the current research programme which, like so many other socially desirable projects, has been savagely affected by recent Government cuts.

Edited Extracts from *Medical Journal of Adventure Related Diseases* K W Ack, Pricourt Books, £5.95

Lack of Locations Syndrome

The Lack Of Sufficient Locations syndrome, often abbreviated to LOST, affects novice and experienced Adventurers alike. A very modern disease, having been endemic for only the last 10 years, its effects on the individual can vary greatly.

LOST occurs when an Adventurer becomes stuck very early on in a game. Only a few locations are at hand to explore and, once having done so, the Adventurer can neither find any means of proceeding to new locations, nor of manipulating the objects found so far.

Symptoms

To an inexperienced novice Adventurer, becoming stuck causes very few detrimental effects. All that

is noticeable is a slight twitching of the upper left eyelid. The novice tends to dismiss the game at this stage, because having solved few or no Adventures, he or she does not really grasp the full implications of Adventuring. The game is thus discarded until the novice becomes more practised.



LOST afflicts the fully experienced Adventurer with more devastating effects. In order to describe these fully, the diagnoses will be split into two parts.

(A) Physical Effects

These are very pronounced. The victim suffers from an uncontrollable twitch in the left eye. The index finger of the right hand is compressed by a full ¼ inch (6.5mm in Europe) due to constant and involuntary poking of the computer keyboard.

Shoulder and back muscles become knotted, tense and very often affected by cramp seizures (this effect was first noticed in 1975 and is known as the "Hunch" complaint).

The Adventurer often has severe cuts and bruises to the forehead, where he or she has tended to nut the most jagged edge of the computer in sheer frustration. The only known antidote for this is the provision of a crash helmet. This has the unfortunate and serious side-effect of completely destroying the computer, when, at the first good hit, it will be reduced to a pile of micro chips.

Loss of appetite and weight and insomnia rapidly set in, reducing the Adventurer to a complete and utter physical wreck. The only cure at this

stage is the complete solution to the Adventure game currently in hand.

(B) Mental Effects

This is, perhaps, even more difficult to diagnose and cure. Once a few Adventures have been completed and a good working knowledge of the art gained, the Adventurer does not take very kindly to being stuck in the first five minutes. The longer he tries to advance the game with no success, the worse he becomes.

It is at this stage that normal perspective breaks down and the mind turns in on itself refusing to acknowledge the real world.

Tests carried out at the Institute for Rehabilitating Adventurers Turned Eccentric (IRATE) show that the mental attitude of an Adventurer deteriorates proportionally as the inverse of the square of the number of Adventures completed. The only method known to restore mental balance is to sit the unfortunate victim in front of a TV set and force him to watch 17 episodes of *Crossroads*. This form of rather cruel mental torture causes the brain to re-orientate itself, so that the hapless Adventurer can find the OFF switch.

All of the above can, of course, be prevented by asking for help at an early stage. However, in their attempts to treat such cases, medical practitioners operating under the National Helpline Service have found that a law of diminishing returns operates. The more experienced the victim, and thus the worse the degree of affliction, the greater the sense of pride he has and the more he finds it a personal affront to admit to being stumped so early. It is a sad fact that the most serious cases of this disease thus go undetected until the complaint has become terminal.

Further research is going on into Adventure-related diseases, but a lack of knowledge on the subject as a whole and very little funding for further research is not helping the situation.

Steve Donoghue

Acornsoft Adventures are peculiar in the world of Adventure. The games, in general, are of a high standard and have a strong following amongst BBC owners. Yet they alone, amongst the better Adventure games, have not been converted for any other micro.

The best known and loved under the Acorn label are by Peter Killworth whose *Philosopher's Quest* is still frustrating players. Now games by other authors are beginning to appear.

Looking back, we find that of Peter's games, we have only covered *PQ*, *Countdown to Doom* and *Sphinx Adventure*. So here, James Douglas and Keith Campbell bring you up to date on those missing titles and some brand new games only just released.

ACHETON

Acheton is probably the best Adventure game yet released for the BBC. The program is written for disc users only and it is of such quality that it seems set to follow in the footsteps of the notorious *Zork!*

Most Adventure games on the Beeb are around 6A (hex) in length, including text and puzzles. *Acheton* has a "main program" of length 8A and the database is over three times that! In fact, Acornsoft had to put the game on two discs, otherwise it wouldn't fit.

The game is text only, though it has some bursts of colour which usually result in death!

The game overcomes the constrictions of memory by accessing the disc for every response. It is rare to have a reply of less than four lines.

I was once greeted by 22 lines of text after one command.

Input too is a great improvement. Full English sentences can be typed and usually correctly interpreted. Multi-commands are used, such as "go northwest and light the lamp, then take the axe, go back and look". Of course, you can still GO NORTH or N if you want!

There are upwards of 350 locations to be explored and 150 objects to be used. The aim of *Acheton* is to find and explore a huge cave. Easy? Hardly! The first problem is how to get underground — the main playing area. The *Acheton* Tounst Board make fairly regular appearances with little notices which are utterly confusing!

The authors, David Seal and Job Thackray, have included gems such as 19 foot Ninjies, talking books, theft-proof potions and a sense of smell. If you sniff in certain locations,



BBC

you get a rather interesting reply. Another must for the traveller is Hades, where all manner of lost souls can be seen: Lady Macbeth washing her hands, Achilles resting his ankle, Julius Caesar removing countless knives and a band of Hell's Angels in a chariot race!

A hunt book is included in the package, but only contains questions and numbers. The user must run a special program which asks for the number of the required hunt and then gets advice by way of evil brain-twisters. This makes it a lot less tempting to cheat, as you have to stop playing to look at the answers.

At around £20, the game is a bit costly, but worth every penny. It is available through Acornsoft, or, hopefully, your local dealer.

Personal Rating 10.5

Jim Douglas

(Editor's note: Jim confesses that he nearly discarded the idea of writing this review, as he found *Acheton* so addictive that he couldn't bear to stop playing!)

QUONDAM

"*Quondam* is a very difficult game." "Too right! Surviving the first three locations takes some brain power."

A silent knight (scuse the pun!), a huge spider's web, and a frightful forest throw you headlong into this game.

This is the latest Acornsoft offering from the keyboard of Peter Killworth who, for the second time (*Hamil* was the first), has joined forces with another author and as a result has

come up with an improved game.

The difference this time is the speed of response. Instead of the "five seconds for a good answer" style, this game gives a very fast yet lengthy reply to most commands.

The aim of the game seems rather vague, other than storing treasure in a "safe" place. In fact, the whole program has an abstract quality which makes it very strange to play. One minute you could be slashing your way past a giant dragon and the next trying to infiltrate the mafia! There is an elaborate banking system which is vital, allowing you to move objects in magical ways throughout the game.

Different time zones are included and they are worse than any maze — they tied my head in knots! It seems necessary to travel back and forth through these to pass certain obstructions.

In fact, the name "*Quondam*" is Latin for "one day" or "sometimes" which may further the idea of time travel.

Some humour is found in a British Rail sandwich. A note is contained within, reading "Help! I'm being held captive in a BR testing plant!"

Fanged customs officials and the Spanish Inquisition must also be dealt with before the game is solved.

The standard Acornsoft hunt book is found within the package, without which I think the game would be nigh-on impossible to solve. Peter Killworth has taken his problems so far with this game that the "most commonly asked questions" number well over a hundred.

Quondam is available for the BBC B on disc or cassette from Acornsoft.

Personal Rating: 7

Jim Douglas

KINGDOM OF HAMIL

Peter Killworth's fourth Adventure for Acornsoft must be his best yet! All the nice features of his previous efforts have been combined into a puzzler's dream!

There are screenfills of text to be read, all interesting and nearly all confusing. The standard input of two words remains, but does not restrict play as a good number of synonyms have been included.

As usual, the author has invented many amusing deaths, such as being crushed by a 15 ton weight only to be told that this is a slight setback! Humour is good, but rather too many puns appear for my taste.

A hunt book is included in the package — and I suspect you'll need it. The puzzles have reached almost "state of the art" in this game. Multiple codes must be cracked and problems go much further than "do X with Y".

The game begins in a chapel where

you sought sanctuary from the nasty beasties which were chasing you. You must escape from the first three locations using only a lamp, a black rod and a mouldy piece of steak! A novel feature which will soon produce nervous twitches is a weasel that comes along after a certain number of moves and tries to eat your arm. Of course, this is a slight setback...

The slow response does not matter in this game for, if the computer thinks a lot about your command, something constructive may well result.

Mazes number three and are real killers! Peter says that he loves to create them. I think a good number of adventurers feel somewhat differently about solving them. Fortunately, a good percentage of the game can be completed before these have to be tackled.

Overall this seems to be the hardest of the Acornsoft titles to date and timing is vital. I should think that

party and horde of media-aliens.

But perhaps they were too busy shopping, for it was market day and, after giving my name to the gatekeeper, I came across the crowds searching for bargains, squeaking and squawking, listening to the sound very carefully, I swear I could hear alien C&VG readers haggling over the price of T-shirts!

But I was looking for a problem! I had the answer to, and soon enough I found it. Below the grating was a network of slimy passages where I came across a moaning robot. It was nice to make his acquaintance, bad diodes and all, for his pessimistic comments on my adventuring cheered me up no end.

There were other take offs too, notably an ET joke, and they all made the game fun to play. On the more serious side, was a sinister building with cold hostile aliens, housing a death room and other forbidding places. And the little old lady — was she all she seemed?



it will be a long while before everything falls into place.

Kingdom of Hamill is for the BBC B from Acornsoft.

Personal Rating: 8

Jim Douglas

SEVENTH STAR

Seventh Star is the name of the alien planet on which I found myself when my spaceship crash landed in a new Adventure for the BBC from Acornsoft by David Hampton. All I could salvage from the wreckage was a bucket, a crowbar and my precious microl!

I set off in search of some signposts pointing earthwards and just up the road came to the gates of a large city. I was therefore surprised that my dramatic arrival on the planet hadn't been swiftly followed by a rescue

The setting and puzzles are interesting, the text is coloured without being gaudy and there are some very good sound effects. The descriptions are wordy and display almost instantly.

None of those slow responses which we've come to associate with Acornsoft Adventures.

The HELP facilities are excellent. As well as hints from HELP, there is a *HELP command which refers you to a clue number in a leaflet supplied with the game.

These are fairly direct clues for those hopelessly stuck — and panicky reviewers!

In short, this is a game I thoroughly enjoyed — and I think you will too! *Seventh Star* is from Acornsoft for the BBC B.

Personal Rating: 8

Keith Campbell

CASTLE OF RIDDLES

Castle of Riddles was originally written as a competition Adventure and has been around for a long time. I didn't get a review copy, so a reader who is a bit paranoid about this game lent me his copy for he wanted to hear what I thought of it. Here goes, Mr Pl!

I am still wondering whether playing it was worth the effort! Like most Acornsoft Adventures, it is abysmally slow. So slow, in fact, that I was able on some occasions to type in upwards of 12 commands in advance and sit back and watch the game play!

It is also one of those "sudden death" games. That is what comes from arranging for the reply to the word EXAMINE (object) to read EH? There is just no way that a wary player can detect signs of danger ahead or discover hidden clues to help in the quest.

Thus, in many cases, the player has to guess at what the author is thinking, rather than being able to use a mixture of logic and careful observation to link apparently unconnected facts.

There is rather a clever solution to a once-only maze just inside the porticulis and, after passing through that, the main part of the game opens up. You find yourself in a courtyard with three exits. Taking one at random, I found myself by a wishing well, eventually ending up in a corridor inhabited by a small bear with a hug that belied his size! This sub-plot does have a sequence that guarantees safety from hugging, but finding it is not so easy!

Having got through the corridor, I was soon in deep trouble for I decided I was in need of a short rest and, laying down on the only bed left in the bear's bedroom, was soon greeted by Mama who came up and wrapped her great hairy arms rather tightly around me.

I tried another tack and came upon the first of the riddle rooms. In each of these a rather hoary riddle is asked (what gets wet as it dries? Wow!) and a new exit opens up when the correct answer is supplied. And so I came to the sitting room, where I had to admire the humour that runs throughout the game. Here was a sketch of a flaxen haired girl which, said the description, had obviously been used as a dartboard!

The game is text only and there is plenty of it. Pity about the speed — even so, it is a game that has given and should continue to give many hours of entertainment for those with enough patience.

Castle of Riddles is for BBC B from Acornsoft.

Personal Rating: 7

Keith Campbell

What is a Quast? Well we reckon it's an Adventure with more than a hint of the classic *Dungeons & Dragons* game about it. Here Keith Campbell, Paul Coppins, Simon Marsh and new recruit Jim Douglas take a look at some Adventures Inspired by D&D.

WIZARD OF AKYRZ

You start this Mysterious Adventure in a throne room in the presence of the King who charges you with the task of rescuing the princess. You also have to find and store some treasures. After a search of the palace, you discover the way out and then probably return for some bits and pieces that you must have missed the first time round.

Going through caves and tunnels (if you have sorted the problems out properly) and, in possession of a couple of treasures, you find yourself on a farm with a rickety bridge and a path blocked by a large rock. The puzzle of moving the rock requires taking a fox, some corn and a chicken over the bridge and it is constructed in such a way as to be a very tricky operation!

The problems get more difficult at this point and I suspect that I overcame the rock problem by my own somewhat dubious method, rather than the "correct" way! Still, all's fair in Adventure and I pressed on happily, finding some strange things in nesting boxes down on the farm!

Most of the problems have fairly obvious pointers to them, but there are a few real stinkers that seem to leave a lot to inspired guesswork. Some of the location exits illogically disappear when you have passed through them, although this is intentional and meant to frustrate the inefficient adventurer!

One thing I am not too keen on is mazes — and in this game they seem to crop up every few locations! At least they are not the "impossible" type. It is not too difficult to blunder through them by hitting N, S, E and W at random and eventually get out if you, like me, are too distrustful to leave potentially valuable objects scattered around as landmarks.

I played the BBC version which is, of course, text only, but didn't seem any the worse for it. The text is coloured which brightens it up no end and the response is instantaneous. Not entirely an original quest, perhaps, but the Adventure is nevertheless enjoyable and worth playing. I rate it amongst the best of the Mysterious Adventures.

Wizard of Akryz is from Channel 8 for a variety of micros.

Personal Rating 7

Keith Campbell

REVIEWS



QUEST

TOWER OF DESPAIR

Malnor the screaming shadow has once more returned to the pleasant land of Aelandor. Using the ring of skulls, he has somehow managed to break free from his banishment to the plain of Lumbo. With ferocious revenge, he summons the forces of darkness and starts to run riot over the land. No mortal army can stand against his forces. But there is one chance for you, as the bravest adventurer in the land, keeper of the Silver Gauntlet and wielder of the Flamebolt.

The Adventure is in two parts, the first of which I enjoyed greatly. It has that certain something that makes the midnight oils burn long and bright. As I struggled to find the passwords that would let me into the second part, I had to admire the writer's skill and ingenuity. They were just out of reach in a way that seemed to make time fly. This feeling was helped along by the illustrated instruction booklet that came with the game for, as well as a map showing the kingdom, it contains 16 detailed pictures of some key locations in the Adventure.

Tower of Despair is an apt title, for now came the despair. It started just after loading in my character from the end of Part 1 into Part 2. Some very strange things began to happen. I found that some of the objects I had brought from Part 1 had mysteriously changed themselves into other objects, some had totally vanished, whilst others had become totally stuck in my inventory, so that I could not get rid of them no matter how

hard I tried — and I tried.

Since the Adventure still held promise, I managed to work out just what I could bring across without something funny happening to it and my patience was rewarded.

I had to use all my skill to beat the new range of puzzles that seemed to be getting more difficult with each step I took. But that's as it should be, for I was drawing closer to my goal — the tower!

This game launches puzzles at you with great vigour at every twist and turn in the plot. They vary from simple ones, like opening a locked trapdoor, to very complex ones like stabbing an angel to death with a magic dagger. This one ranges over many locations and contains many sub-puzzles.

Although written using the Quill system, unlike other such Adventures that all look the same on the screen, *Tower of Despair* has gothic characters and fancy artwork which makes playing it reminiscent of looking through a very old book. I particularly enjoyed playing this Adventure and, despite the problems I had, I considered it to be a good one. At the modest price of £7.95 it must rank among the best in value.

Tower of Despair is from the Games Workshop for the 48k Spectrum.

Personal Rating: 8

Paul Coppins

FIRE ON THE WATER

I have to say that I usually hate any game that is not pure Adventure — that is, one that does not require logic to solve problems. Adventure games, to my mind, should be of the original type and not so-called "Arcade Adventures". Lone Wolf's *Fire on the Water* is the exception to that rule.

Although the game is not an arcade Adventure, it does rely on graphics for the fighting scenes and is a role-playing game.

You are a Kai warrior, a sort of Samurai warrior who has powers to communicate with animals, and whose mind can attack other minds with a power called "mind force". As a student from the Kai monastery, you start off in the game being taught to fight and soon get used to being well and truly trounced by your master.

You are later sent out to collect firewood as a punishment for inattention in class and, as luck would have it, whilst you are out, the monastery is destroyed by the Dark Lords, and all the Kai Lords are killed. It is your task to avenge their deaths and warn the King of the threat of stack.

The game now starts in earnest and many battles and problems confront you. Movement takes place by menu-type commands and, although this

may put you off, it is offset by the graphic fighting scenes which are great.

There's an accompanying book with the game which is great fun but, as I'm no role-playing expert, I passed it over to a friend. Paul Gleden, who is into that sort of thing and he promptly solved it in half an hour without cheating! In his opinion, it is a book for beginners which I can quite believe, as it took me three days to complete!

The book and game can be bought in two ways. You can get the game only for £6.95 or the combined package for £8.95. The book alone can be obtained for £1.50, so if you are thinking of buying the combined package, do a quick bit of arithmetic first. "Nuff said!" as the Chief Examiner would probably remark!

Personal Rating: 5

Simon Marsh

the attributes of your companions.

Then off you go, into a maze of short descriptions and untimely deaths. A map routine is included in the game, but it can hardly be called a masterpiece as it consists of U, D, N, S, E, and W characters and a few arrows — hardly an easy-to-follow guide.

An interesting feature is the skill level. This controls the number of locations and problems that you will encounter and how easy it will be to complete the game. It is possible to name your fellow travellers, but no matter how hard I tried I could not force Edgar the Troll to kill Zippy the Dwarf! Text, in my experience, was rarely more than 120 characters long and could hardly be called inspiring.

Swords and Sorcery is for the BBC B from Kansas.

Personal Rating: 3

Jim Douglas

Telengard from Eclipse Software



SWORDS AND SORCERY

Kansas splattered the praises of this game over an A4 page in *Squirel User*, claiming it to be the first "quest" game to appear for the BBC. A "quest" game is like *Dungeons and Dragons* on a computer, though not half as good!

Someone at Kansas should have been rapped on the knuckles by now, for on the cassette inlay is the title *Swords and Sorcery*!

That aside, what of the game? I think you'll get most fun from reading the inlay to yourself. The program fills the whole Beeb, which doesn't say a lot as it is written in Basic and loads in five parts. To aid you in your Adventure (the plot of which is too intricate to go into here) are three prisoners who are given the chance to go free if they will assist you. The D&D style shows itself here, as random strength, luck and race generator springs to life and decides

TELENGARD

Telengard is one of those role-playing dungeon games in which you are accorded varying degrees of strength, constitution, charisma, intelligence etc. before going off into the dungeon, hoping to slay monsters and gather treasures to advance your rating.

There have been games of this sort around for years and, although recently released here, this one is Copyright 1983 by Avalon Hill.

The format is not very original, a part-map of the dungeon occupying most of the screen, to the right of which is a list valuing your current state. Moving around causes the map to redraw around you. Occasionally you may wish to visit the Rocky Alehorse Restaurant or the Worthy Mead Inn to cash in on your achievement and replenish your spells.

As these games go, this one is

among the best, for the graphics are effective and combine well with a few realistic sound-effects and occasional music.

The game is in real time, but there is a "demo" command which allows you to play at leisure. A detailed knowledge of the commands, monsters and treasures is necessary to play the real time option, for a glance at the instruction booklet reveals quite a complex list.

It is suggested on the inlay that you can play solo, or use the game for a competition between a number of players. This gives the impression that *Telengard* is a multi-player game, which is untrue. In fact, the competition element comprises of short solo sessions after which players compare their scores to determine a winner.

OK if you like it, I don't. *Telengard* runs on a Commodore 64 and comes from Eclipse Software for £7.95.

Personal Rating: 3

Keith Campbell

THE WILD BUNCH

Even British Telecom is trying to get in on the act now by producing computer games under the Firebird label.

The Wild Bunch is one and starts by telling you that one night you hear a gunshot and go over to a man lying in the middle of the road. Before he dies, he mentions that a member of the infamous Wild Bunch has shot him.

You pick up the gun and, at that moment, the sheriff, who has always got to be late arriving on this type of occasion, sees the gun in your hand. Using his amazing powers of deduction, he accuses you of the murder and you run off to find the Wild Bunch to clear your name.

I hope all that has not whetted your appetite, for if you sample it, you'll probably end up with a bad taste in your mouth. The plot might be quite an original one, but the implementation of it is rubbish!

You have menus for everything! There are five towns where the Bunch could be hiding — Dodge City, Dry Gulch, Nugget City, Bulletville and Deadman's Creek. Yes! Very inspiring! In each town there is a sheriff's office, store, telegraph office and so on.

The game is not very rewarding even when you find a member of the Wild Bunch. You can only take him or kill him — personally, I would have liked to have been able to make him tell me where the rest were.

And you bought British Telecom shares? If their value depends upon tripe like this then I suggest you sell them quick before they become completely valueless!

Personal Rating: 2

Simon Marsh

IN THE PACKAGE

As with all Infocom games, it's worth having a closer look at the packaging.

Within the simple cardboard box containing *Enchanter* is an inner folder, distinctively coloured with symbolic drawings. Tucked away inside is an instruction booklet produced in the form of a Medieval Guild directory and a piece of off-white paper closely representing parchment, upon which are written your orders. All this is closed by the seal of the circle of Enchanters.

Sorcerer comes complete with a holding pouch containing a 12 page issue of "Popular Enchanting" magazine which is really a comprehensive guide to playing the game, in satirical form. An Infotester is also included, being a large cardboard disc revolving within an outer case. It contains codes to which you will have to refer to get very far in the game.

Oh, and of course! With each package you get a disc!

SPELL CASTING FOR BEGINNERS

Enchanter and *Sorcerer* are games in which the player must learn as he goes along. Information found in various books and documents will stand him in good stead — once read, he can skip them next time around, possibly saving valuable moves.

More important, though is the acquisition of magical skills and in this respect it is important to understand just how spell-casting works. A spell may be resident within the *Enchanter* or *Sorcerer* and he will only need to cast it for it to take effect. The power and number of spells so readily available will depend on the experience of the *Enchanter*, but among them will almost certainly be the *Gnusto* spell, used to write spells into a spell book.

A spell is found on a scroll and may be cast directly from it. In such circumstances, however, the spell can be used only once and is then gone forever — turned into dust. Alternatively, it may be written into a spell book. This is the *Enchanter's* most valuable tool — without it he is lost. A spell, when written in the book, must be memorized before each casting — a slightly tedious chore, but with the bonus that it remains in the book for further use.

There are one or two spells that are too powerful for the *Gnusto* spell to copy into the book — these can only be cast direct from the scroll. It follows, therefore, that the use of such a spell must be considered very carefully.

Each spell has a name and the *READ SPELLS* command lists which spells are currently available to an *Enchanter*. A typical list would be *Gnusto*, *Rezrov*, *Frotz*, *Gaspar*, *Meef* and *Izyuk*. Remembering which spells are in the book, which have been memorized and their purposes is not as difficult as it sounds.

You get a real feeling of magical power, when, with confidence, you

can cast the right spell at the right time in a competent manner!

ENCHANT YOUR SYSTEM!

Enchanter is available for computers with a disc drive only. The range of versions includes: Atari 400/800, Apple II, Commodore 64, IBM PC, PCjr, TRS-80 Models I and III, DEC RT-11, DEC Rainbow, Osborne, TI-99/4A and CP/m. Price varies according to version.

ENCHANTER

The warlock Krill has subjected the land to his evil powers for far too long. Many a powerful *Enchanter* has been pitted against him by the Circle of Enchanters. All have failed, cut down by his evil hand.

The elders of the circle, headed by the great and powerful Belboz, have summoned you, a novice in the art of magic, in a last desperate attempt to overthrow him. Belboz and other experienced Enchanters have such great powers they can be sensed by Krill at incredible distances. It is hoped that your powers are still weak, so that you will be able to enter Krill's castle unnoticed.

Hopefully, once there, you will be able to unlock the darkest secrets of the castle, gaining enough magical power for the final battle.

As the *Adventure* starts, the *Enchanter* finds himself at a fork in the road. It's decision time right from the start! After taking that decision (and which is the best you'll have to find out for yourself!) the easy part of the game is over and you find yourself outside the castle gates.

Here the fun starts, for since you are a novice, there is no way you can get close to the evil Krill, and live, during the early stages of this truly magical *Adventure*. If you are to have any chance of defeating Krill in battle, you must find spells in the hope that by pitting your magic against his, you win the battle to the death — *Enchanterstyle*.

The search for the spell scrolls is long and hard. It seems quite easy at first, but after a while things become really tough and the correct use of magic rapidly becomes a matter of life and death.

The magic used throughout the *Adventure* varies a great deal, from simple spells like one for talking to animals, to one powerful enough to break even the greatest degree of Enchantment. In addition, each of the many spells may have more than one possible use. The "Rezrov" spell, for example, is used for opening locked doors and other such objects without keys and is a great help in cracking many a tormenting puzzle. There — I have given a clue. I must watch it!



Infocom's new fantasy series expands the horizons of the Great Underground Empire beyond the *Zork* trilogy. Part of the once extinct GUE has been re-inhabited, but now the emphasis is on magic, rather than finding treasure and fighting other characters.

In *Enchanter* and *Sorcerer*, the currency is the familiar *Zorkmid* and *Frobozz* magical devices abound! But the *Adventure's* way of going about solving the mysteries and completing the games is somewhat different.

Paul Coppine has been defeating the evil Krill in *Enchanter*, whilst KEITH CAMPBELL, as a junior Sorcerer, has been rescuing his mentor — Belboz the Necromancer. Here Keith and Paul present an in-depth rundown on the series.

It was a real shame that my magic battle with Knill could not have lasted longer. Still, I did enjoy fighting fire with fire, as it were, and it made a very welcome change from the usual hacking away with swords and axes. You could say that it made the Wizard of Frobozz look like an amateur.

In *Enchanter* (and *Sorcerer*, too) the necessity to eat, drink and sleep is taken into account, almost as in real life.

It is while one is sleeping that some very intriguing clues may be obtained in the form of strange dreams.

The enjoyment of the game is increased all the more by subtle references to *Zork* and *Frobozz* throughout the game. One could almost call *Enchanter* "Zork IV with magic", for there is even an Adventurer to be found complete with elvish sword and brass lamp. Every so often he stops to ask the way to Flood Control Dam No. 3, or say "Hello, sailor!"

If you liked *Zork*, you'll love *Enchanter* — it's magic!

SORCEROR

I'm all right, mate — I'm fully Gaspard! A peace of mind has passed over me! Not only that, I've muffed the morgia, amfized Probar, yommed a gnome and given a parrot a brilliant but momentary glimpse of its own future.

In case you wonder whether I've really flipped for good, I'd better tell you that I'm playing *Sorcerer* — and I'm learning fast. In fact I am already able to cast spells with a fair degree of success. Whether they have the desired effect is another matter!

To start off, you are pitched into a horrific situation in a twisted forest — every way you turn it's curtains, either at the fangs of a hellhound, the venom in a snake pit, or at the whim of a Frobozz minefield.

Lucky then, that this is only a dream! But when you wake up, you find all the other occupants of the guild mysteriously absent and it's not long before you come around to thinking they've gone further than down to the village of Accardi-by-the-Sea for a spot of shopping. Due to an over-conscious nymph, your only way out is to cast a spell.

You are helped along the way by an ancient volume of the *Encyclopaedia Frobozzica*, in which you can look up information on almost any subject you want. You can't just browse, though — you have to know what you want to know! Should you need more information on Amfiz, for example, the entry reads: "A spell produced by International Business Magic."

How you get that spell is part of the puzzle, and cleverly locked into an

infotater — a rotating wheel of coded information included in the package.

Once you have cast the spell, you can drop in on one, and only one, of the persons missing from the guild. Doing the rounds provides interesting reading, but one true path leads you to the game proper.

Cue up where you find yourself? In a twisted forest! But this time, if you've spent your time at the Academy well,



SPELLING FOR BEGINNERS



you will have some powerful magic at your disposal.

Once on the night track, there is a whole new world to explore, all part of the Great Underground Empire that was once *Zork*. An enjoyable trip is a visit to the amusement park, where you can take a thrilling roller coaster ride — courtesy of the Frobozz Magic Roller Coaster Co. The ride is described in detail, all in text of course — who needs graphics with an Infocom-style narrative? There are plenty of other attractions down at Bozbarland, Entertainment Capital of the Empire! — a casino with a killer of a one-arm-bandit, an arcade where you can try your hand at clobbering bunnies with a rubber ball, a Haunted House and a Flume.

The text has gems every bit as good as the best of *Zork*. I particularly liked a sequence by the toll gate, guarded by a fat sleeping gnome. I tried opening it, but "only the gnome can open the gate," I was told. Looking through my spell book, I decided to try the *IZYUK* spell, enabling me to fly. No luck — the arch over the gate prevented my passage. Perhaps a touch of the Revovis might do the trick, I thought. Success! Or was it? The gate sprang open, awakening the gnome who immediately slammed it shut, shouting "Nobody gets through here without paying a Zorkmid — no-one, not no how!"

Being minus the necessary mud, I took a sneaky peek into the gnome's mind, using my Yoman spell. "The thoughts of the sleeping gnome are focussed on certain activities involving female gnomes. Embarrassed, you withdraw." Such attention to detail!

In *Sorcerer* you will almost certainly have to SAVE your position time and again, even if you have taken the precaution of Gasparding yourself. Gaspar is a spell which bestows powers of reincarnation upon the casters but, believe it or not, there are places where a good Gasparding doesn't help much! For you may think you are well insured, only to discover, on reincarnation, that you fell into a logical trap by casting it in such a way as to make continuing the game pointless.

Sorcerer is another huge Infocom Adventure, full of excitement, mystery and humour. My only disappointment was that, on the Commodore version, the response is abysmally slow — much slower than for Commodore *Zorks*. A simple GET (object) for example, takes about 30 seconds for a response. Nevertheless, it is still a game to which I am addicted, for the rewards are worth the wait! Coming from an impatient Adventurer like myself, that is saying something! In fact, I'm decidedly FWEEPY about it!

ADVENTURELAND

OK — admit it! How many of you, like me, started to play Adventures because of Keith's pages? Keith's column, in the first issue of C&VG, started off a series of programming tips on how to write Adventure games. It also featured his first review — of the first ever Adventure to be written on a micro, *Adventureland*.

This changed my whole outlook towards computers and I started to play computer games for the first time in my life instead of trying to make my ZX81 play music through the radio! So I went out and brought a copy of *Espionage Island* — and got stuck in the swamp!

Some years later I was delighted to discover that *Adventureland* had been converted for a computer I had — a Spectrum. So in September, at the PCW Show, I asked if I could have a copy. Scott Adams actually went over to his own stand and BOUGHT me a copy of his own game! I've since wondered if I have the only copy of *Adventureland* that Scott himself paid for!

Well, at last I had the game whose review made me start playing Adventures! But there was a snag! A few weeks later, Keith phoned and said, "How about a review of *Adventureland* — you know, a sort of new boy's approach to the game for people who haven't been able to play it before, and who hadn't read that early review of mine?"

"OK boss, will do!" said I, bowing reverently in a southerly direction.

Enough of history — on with the reviews! *Adventureland* is seven years old now and I did not expect such an old game to compare with the likes of *The Hobbit* (Ugh!) and *Sherlock* (brill!) with their all-singing, all-dancing, multi-word English input. Well, we can all make mistakes and I made a huge one. This game is THE best ever to find its way into the memory of my computer and is, without a doubt, my all time favourite.

You start off in a forest with nothing but trees for company, but you will soon be collecting such things as a rusty axe and a bladder (I had some very strange ideas about this object).

The total number of locations is not large, but their layout makes you feel you are in a very large Adventure. There are no lengthy descriptions, but even though short they are very atmospheric. Along with the tight plot and logic involved within this game, these go to make the scenes very believable.

The object is to collect 13 treasures. To do this you must outwit beasts like the dragon, who's a pain in the arm, and chuggers who are a pain all over! When you first come

REVIEWS



The original Scott Adams series first started speering back in 1978, in the days when home computers cost more than a large screen colour TV. That was the era of the TRS-80, Apple and Pet as the main home micros.

There followed a boom in cheaper hardware which brought computer ownership within the reach of millions. But in the UK, most of these were British micros like the BBC, Spectrum and Dragon. Adventure players were able to read all about this great Adventure series from the States, but were unable to play them, for they had not been converted to run on British machines.

The past year has seen a change in all that. All Scott's new games are released at the outset for the Spectrum and BBC, whilst the classics are steadily being converted — in most cases by Brian Howarth, already famous over here for his own Mysterious Adventure series.

So for owners of these machines, who missed Keith's early reviews and wonder if the games are now old hat, here is a collection of brand new reviews of the first four Scott Adams Adventures released for the Spectrum. We don't like repeating ourselves in C&VG, so to get a fresh outlook, Keith asked Stephen Donoghue and Simon Marsh to write them.

across him, the dragon is sleeping. If you ask for help here, a voice booms out. There are only three ways to wake the dragon! Finding even one is difficult enough and the chances are that you will have got him out of bed the wrong side, anyway!

This is the game with the famous evil smelling mud and a sign in a meadow proclaims 'In some places mud is good, in others...' This is typical of the air of mystery and intrigue built up in the game.

A simple verb-noun input system is all that is used in *Adventureland*, but is more useful than you could imagine and in no way loses out in comparison with more sophisticated routines.

Even after seven years on the market, *Adventureland* rates tops with me on playing it for the first time. If you haven't tried it, go out and buy it now! I'm sure you'll agree with me! By the way, the graphics are great too!

Personal Rating: 10

Simon Marsh

SECRET MISSION

The next in the series can also be found under the title *Mission Impossible*, if you have an old copy. The opening sequences of the game are based on that bygone TV series of the same name and the TV people objected to the use of this title.

This one is slightly different from the two preceding games in the series, in that it is not a treasure hunting/storing Adventure. There is, instead, a definite goal that must be attained.

The game starts off with you finding yourself in a room with only a tape recorder for company. Playing the tape informed me, Mr Phelps, that my mission (should I decide to accept it) was to stop a saboteur's time bomb destroying an automated nuclear reactor. The saboteur had a heart complaint and, planning suicide with the bomb, was still around. To make movement inside the building difficult, he had rewired the security system!

When the tape had stopped playing, I searched the office for the envelope and keys promised me on the tape, but there was none to be found.

To put it mildly, I was well and truly stumped, so I got on the phone to Helpline Headquarters (Keith's place) and asked him if my version of the game was corrupted?

Keith retorted with a small laugh and mentioned something about moving around a bit and everything would fall into place. He could have given me a bit more help. I cursed under my breath — so much for 'staff' perks! But then suddenly, just

as he had said, everything started happening.

I heard a thump and soon found the saboteur lying on the floor, dead, together with a torn and completely unreadable map. It seemed I was on my own again. Only pride prevented me from phoning Keith again, but I managed to convince myself that I could, somehow, solve the game alone!

After a bit of exploration, I managed to obtain a pass that allowed me through some of the security doors around the reactor, but in a moment of stupidity I paid no heed to caution and somehow set off the detonation sequences of the bomb. Wuhh a few moves — BOOOM — I was dead!

After a few days' hard work I managed to win through and was rather disappointed that, after all that brain-bashing, I was not rewarded with anything more than a "Well done".

I felt that the text was slightly lacking in atmosphere, so for once I have to say that playing the game with the graphics ON is an advantage, to compensate.

This game is rated under Scott's own difficulty level as advanced, and I believe him. So don't let this one be your first introduction to Scott's series — try a couple of easier ones first, to become familiar with Scott's own brand of logic.

Personal Rating: 8

Simon Marsh

VOODOO CASTLE

Hubble, bubble toil and trouble, Scott Adams concedes the Adventure throne and gives it to his wife Alexis in *Voodoo Castle* which finds you in the castle of Count Cristo. He has fallen foul of an evil curse and lies death-like in his coffin. Your part is to find the means with which to remove the curse and restore the Count to his former self.

There are a lot of different locations to explore in which you discover many interesting objects and a good few red herrings to help you on your way.

One location which must be mentioned is the fireplace inside the ballroom. This most dirty of places holds many secrets which lead to many an important discovery. Finding a solution to it all could at first be difficult, but make a clean sweep of things and all becomes light.

Wandering around the castle reveals other strange places. A trophy room of a different sort looks promising, proving the saying that two heads are better than one. What weird experiments are taking place in the laboratory? What are those chemicals in the test-tube for? Why can't you take the strange Ju-Ju bag?

(What is a Ju-Ju, anyway?) At first the answers are shrouded from you, but push on, and you'll crack it.

Somewhere else reveals a large cast iron pot full of witches' brew. Smells nice and drinking it proves to be a moving experience in more ways than one.

Finally, as one would expect in a voodoo Adventure, there is plenty of strong magic. Finding the medium Megan will help here, because she will use her mystical powers to give you a clue or two.

The game reaches its climax at the very end, when, armed with all the necessary knowledge and items needed, you perform a voodoo ceremony of your own, reciting the incantations to restore Count Cristo back to life.

Alexis Adams is a very strict lady when it comes to entering your commands. She makes sure that you enter precisely what you mean. Failure to do so will result in you getting nowhere fast. Take heart from this, however, because in the true Scott Adams style, the answers and solutions are always nailed some place so obvious that you tend to overlook them.

Another well written and entertaining Adventure from the Adams stable. So pick up your crystal ball and lucky rabbit's foot, and give *Voodoo* a run for its money.

Personal Rating: 8

Steve Donoghue

PIRATE ADVENTURE

Right, you maseable set of land-lubbers. It's yo ho ho and a bottle of rum, as we set off in another of Scott's games.

The story unfolds in your London flat, where you discover that two treasures are waiting to be found. Sharing the flat with you are some very unusual objects. For what purpose could a pair of meakers be of benefit? The answer to this problem could at first slip your mind. Soon, though, you'll find the means to magically transport yourself to Pirate's Island where the fun really begins.

On your journey around the islands, you'll come across the leading character of the plot, none other than the pirate, of course. His main ambition in life is to stay permanently drunk on rum, whenever he can get hold of some, that is. Could this dubious character be helpful? Can he be trusted? Well in this instance it's certainly a case of found and lost (the pirate, that is). Figuring out what to do about this unsavoury person adds to the excitement.

Of course, a pirate's best friend is his parrot, and Polly here is no exception, turning out to be a very helpful companion. For the price of a few crackers, she'll tell you many interesting facts to help you on your way. In fact, a whole zoo of animals abound on this island. Is that mongoose all he seems and how do you cross a pit full of hungry crocodiles? It can certainly be a tight squeeze solving some of the problems you encounter but, as always, the key to the solution is under your feet.

It soon becomes apparent that the two treasures for which you search are nowhere to be found and that you must build a boat to sail from Pirate's Island to Treasure Island. But where on earth do you find the materials to build the boat?

Slowly but surely, as you explore the island, the pieces of the jigsaw are revealed. Put them together successfully and you've built your boat and are half-way through the Adventure.

Eventually it's "Land Ahoy" at Treasure Island and you can almost smell those treasures. So with a good sense of direction and keen eyesight, prepare to pace yourself to find riches beyond your dreams.

Pirate is one of Scott's easier Adventures, but don't let that fool you. There are still problems to be solved and, believe me, you'll probably die laughing! This has to be the funniest of them all. Sprinkled with witty remarks, it'll keep you chuckling right to the end.

Personal Rating: 8

Steve Donoghue



Most home computer owners in the United States these days have a disc drive. A drive offers the advantage of being able to access, read and re-read data into memory very quickly, and in random order. Cassette tapes are very different. To access data positioned at the end of the tape requires that nearly all the tape must pass the playback head and then, if previous data items are required, the tape must be rewound by the operator.

Infocom have, for a long while now, produced Adventure games that use the capabilities of disc access to read in data quickly in any required order, and at such a speed that it hardly delays the response. This means that a vast and complex game can be run on a relatively cheap micro, since the computer's memory need contain little more than the program itself.

Competition in this field is beginning to hot up, but Infocom undoubtedly have the lead at present, and have the technique neatly wrapped up. All their titles are available for a wide range of micros, but they are not cheap at £30-£40 each (unless you have a Commodore 64, for which many titles cost a mere £11.99).

Perhaps their special appeal is due to Infocom's policy (and proud boast) of text only — no graphics. The text is so descriptive that no computer graphics could do justice to the subject.

Whilst nearly every other series has come in for criticism somewhere along the line from C&VG readers, not one letter of disenchantment has ever reached us about any Infocom game, despite a rapidly increasing number of drive-only players.

The complete range of Infocom games is *Zork I, II, and III* (Fantasy); *Slarcross*, *Planetfall* and *Suspended* (Science Fiction); *Deadline* and *The Witness* (Detective); *Enchanter* and *Sorcerer* (Fantasy); *Infidel*, *Cut-throats*, *Seastalker* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

In the next few months we will be looking at *The Witness* and the famous *Hitchhiker's Guide*. Right now, Paul Coppins brings you up to date on two of the latest titles.

REVIEWS



INFOCOM

SEASTALKER

As its name suggests, *Seastalker* is an Adventure with a nautical flavour and full of seafaring tales of mystery and suspense.

One thing is certain, if you play this game you will be kept on the edge of your seat — in this case, the driving seat of the *Scimitar*, a two-man submarine which you command. Using some of the most modern navigational equipment and a lot of luck, you must pilot *Scimitar* into the darkest depths of the ocean, to save Aquadome, an underwater complex, from the evil Dr Thorpe.

Once you reach the Aquadome, things start to happen very fast, for as well as learning about the monster that has been attacking it, you find to your horror that there is a saboteur in your midst. So whilst getting the Aquadome ready for the final battle with the evil doctor, the saboteur must be discovered and dealt with before he either kills you or makes off with *Scimitar*.

Seastalker's problems are not difficult and, with one of Infocom's less agreeable monsters thrown in, should appeal to the more adventurous junior player, for whom it is intended. In fact, the whole package has been designed to help young adventurers take their first step into the world of Infocom Adventures, for the game comes with a printed simulated game showing how interactive fiction works.

As an aid to the adventurer, included with the game are eight Infocards. On one side of each card are the details of the characters to be met whilst playing, and on the other

side are hidden clues which can only be revealed by passing them through a special slot in the game folder. However, the clues are partial and completion of them is only possible whilst you are actually playing.

A command new to Infocom games is *GO TO* which enables you to travel directly to the section or area you wish to enter.

Seastalker is for a range of micros, including Atan 32k and Commodore 64, with disc drive.

Personal Rating: S

Paul Coppins

CUT-THROATS

Following *Infidel* and *Suspended*, Michael Berlyn, one of Infocom's top authors, has once again brought together the right ingredients to create yet another superb Adventure.

In *Cut-throats* you are a skin diver who happens to be on an island called *Hardscrabble*. You are approached by a bunch of cut-throats who make a proposition, involving you locating two sunken wrecks containing treasure. You have just learned of the location of these ships from an old map entrusted to you for safe keeping by a old shipmate only minutes before he was killed in a scuffle by a couple of shadowy characters, just outside your hotel room.

Your instincts tell you to have nothing to do with the proposition, but with such high stakes, you consider it worth taking the risk.

First you have to go about getting the necessary equipment to make the dive, at the same time attempting to keep your new-found colleagues from selling each other out. Not an easy task at the best of times.

In the second half of the Adventure, you start diving in earnest. There are two wrecks and each time you play the wreck your find is determined at random. Depending upon which ship you are allotted, the plot differs in a very subtle way, having the effect of making *Cut-throats* two Adventures in one. Some of the differences are so small that it's very easy to miss them altogether, but if missed, the result can be murder — as I found out once or twice in my case.

In conclusion, *Cut-throats* is an Adventure that I personally enjoyed immensely. It has not got the most difficult of puzzles, but then it is graded as a standard level game aimed at Adventurers of moderate skill. But it has a good plot and a great sense of humour.

Cut-throats is available for a wide range of computers, all requiring disc drive, including Atan 48k and Commodore 64, from Infocom.

Personal Rating: 10

Paul Coppins

DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

If you didn't already know it, *Doomdark's Revenge* is the follow on from *Lords of Midnight*. This time, Mike Singleton has gone one better than before and created 6000 locations, each with a view of eight directions.

This time you play the part of Luxor the Moonprince, in a battle against Shareth the Heartstealer. Morkin, betrothed to Tanithel, the daughter of the Lord of Dreams, has been imprisoned by Shareth.

Initially there are three characters under your control, Luxor, Rorthon the Wise and Tanithel. Morkin is controllable after you have released him.

The graphics are slightly different from *Midnight*. Above the view is printed the commentary on a yellow background and below this is the view of the scene. The views are virtually monochrome pictures — shades of light and dark of a predominant colour, save for a few indoor locations and some foreground figures. As before, each character has a number of moves every day, but in *Doomdark* the predominant colour changes from red at dawn, through light blue to dark blue at night.

Again, a keyboard overlay is provided, with characters, directions and other commands such as choose, move, and so on, assigned a key.

The background to the epic is described by the short story "The Icecreek Chronicles" in the glossy 24-page instruction booklet.

Whereas *Midnight* had a map on the back of the book, albeit rather too reduced for comfort, what is on the back of the *Doomdark* book cannot really be described as a map at all. To get a proper one will cost you an

REVIEWS



GENERAL

What was the most sagarty awatted sequel to the *Adventure of 84*, *Lords of Midnight*? Mike Singleton's *Doomdark's Revenge* that's what. Here Keith Campbell takes an in-depth look at Mike's latest epic while the rest of KC's team dives into the games we couldn't fit into the other review categories! Read on — you're bound to find something that inspires you.

extra £1.98 for a giant poster map with wipe-clean surface. On this you can mark up the positions of your forces and spill coffee at will. This is available by post from Beyond, but I feel it

is a pity that it is not supplied with the game.

Doomdark's Revenge is of the same high standard as *Midnight*, but it does seem a little "samey" and I can't help wondering if the novelty will have worn off by the time the trilogy is completed.

Doomdark's Revenge is for the 48k Spectrum, priced £9.95, from Beyond.

Personal Rating: 7

Keith Campbell

GATEWAY TO KAROS

At a glance, *Gateway to Karos* seems much like the other Acorn titles but, from the outer cover inwards, it differs more and more! The most prominent improvement is language (no, I don't mean that sort!). The game is in machine code and therefore has a rather fast response. Also, full sentences can be typed — but the vocabulary is quite limiting — if one word is not recognised the whole command is ignored.

The aim is to find a talisman which a dozy wizard left lying around. So what's new? Actually, the plot is rather clever, but the game doesn't live up to it. Some of the text in the game is both long and interesting, but much of it is not and, once you have traversed about half of the 250 locations, you will get frustrated.

Here, characters make their Acornsoft debut, but they are about as static as possible. Conversations are very one-sided, replies being: "where", "how" and lots of "I don't know's".

Colour is used to some extent, but this only brightens the game for an observer. Playing it is rather dull. The program is very hasty and, after every INV command, it clears the screen.

In itself, the game is bearable but nothing out of the ordinary. One of the biggest puzzles is trying to avoid falling to your death from a very high cliff. Standard routines have to be performed, such as chopping through "thick undergrowth" with an axe that is hidden about 50 locations away. These problems get rather tedious and slow the game-play to below tolerance levels! On the plus side, responses are fast and there are lots of places to explore, but I hope the author realises that a huge map does not necessarily make a good game.

Most Beeb adventurers who have tried Acorn titles will be surprised to read such an unenthusiastic review, but the author most commonly seen, Peter Killworth, is writing a different sort of game and the change in format seems to detract from the fun of this one.

Gateway to Karos is from Acornsoft for the BBC B.

Personal Rating: 4

Jim Douglas

Tanithel the Fey stands
in the Forest of Fanqim
looking West.



Doomdark's Revenge

KING SOLOMON'S MINES

Africa, March 1903, and a dying adventurer staggers into Trader Jim's outpost stores from the jungle, raving madly about 7ft high natives, snow and volcanoes.

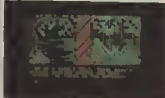
As the man draws his dying breath, Trader Jim offers you some bargains — adventurer's equipment you can't afford to be without. But you can only select five items.

Let's see, what shall we have? A rifle, perhaps? "Smart man... if only they were loaded!" How about a canteen? "Ash. Maybe a wee drop of something to go in that?" And so on! But you do get a chance to reselect — and it could all be bluff anyway!

Then you start off into Part 1 of this two-part (both supplied) Adventure, but not before a message tells you what the dead man kept raving about just before he died.

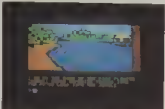
There are three levels of play and they control what sort of clue you get on typing HELP. The hardest level is Jungle Jim type — all very chatty and quite a giggle so far.

Setting off from beside the river, I moved into jungle and eventually



King Solomon's Mines

met my end in quicksand. There had to be another way. There wasn't, another way. There wasn't, but what the inlay cunningly doesn't mention, and what you can't detect until you catch on, is that you are being timed. Delay too much in a tricky situation and it may be too late to save



King Solomon's Mines

yourself! There — I've given a clue, it's a nasty habit I've got!

This is a graphic Adventure with an instant picture at every location. Instant pictures I can stand, for it's mainly my impatience that puts me off graphics. Some of these illustrations are a bit lumpy, but others are really superb — particularly one of a waterfall, where the sun is dancing on the spray and you can see

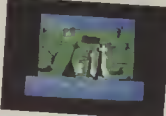
faint rings of light shimmering up and down the falls.

The game is unusual in play because your exits are not displayed unless you call them up; nor are visible items which are listed by typing L. These, like the inventory, are displayed for a set time before the prompt is restored. Very similar to *Mystery at Munroe Manor*, possibly because it's from the same stable.

It will be a difficult game to complete for the solutions don't come easily. *The Search for King Solomon's Mines* is from Severn Software and fast loads on a Commodore 64, priced £8.95.

Personal Rating: 6

Keith Campbell



Castle of Terror

CASTLE OF TERROR

The village path winds up to a forbidding castle which looms over the horizon. Two villagers dig the fields below an old windmill, their shovels frantically probing the earth and throwing the spoil over their shoulders. The air is heavy.

Down at The Duck, the villagers are making merry around the bar, all save an old man who sits alone downing his sorrows. A short chat reveals the cause of his distress and, in a moment of pity, you offer him help.

Castle of Terror is the latest Adventure offering from Melbourne House. It is a graphic Adventure with music all the way. Response is fast and the very detailed pictures are not only drawn quickly, but are then filled with colour in the blink of an eye.

The music is rather like film background music and conveys an underlying mood of foreboding. The melody changes as you move around, but they all blend quite naturally together.

Each location has many exits, but mapping is difficult, because the destinations to which many exits lead are quite illogical. However, it is easy enough to blunder around and to arrive at your chosen location eventually.

Objects are found in some unusual places and, after a few replays, it becomes apparent that a certain play sequence must be adopted in order for some of them to become avail-

able. In fact, a lot of the problems revolve around getting the required objects.

The game is in two parts and the inventory and score from Part 1 is carried through into Part 2. But getting into the castle itself, which carries you through into Part 2, is perhaps the most difficult problem. It didn't beat me but, after a long session spent cracking it, I was disappointed with the solution. It wouldn't work until after I had elicited a clue, but having guessed the answer before even trying to get the clue, I had no need to look for the clue, if you see what I mean! This held me up for hours and it seemed to be a discouragement to lateral thinking and rather contrived.

Full sentences are accepted as input, but here, as with most such games, the syntax of anything longer than two words has to be precise. The verb list is given by the command VOCAB and at first seems to have some glaring omissions. I found myself carrying a rope I could neither TIE nor THROW and a knife that wouldn't CUT, despite it being sharp. However, in the second part of the game, all this changed, because typing VOCAB again revealed a new list of verbs. It contained many I thought I'd need in the first place!

The animation of the characters, together with the continuous music, is pleasantly diverting and the whole presentation is extremely attractive. If you are an experienced player, you will almost certainly find this game a disappointment, so take note that my personal rating is low for this reason and that I would recommend it to younger adventurers and novices.

Castle of Terror is for the Commodore 64 from Melbourne House, priced £9.95.

Personal Rating: 5

Keith Campbell



Castle of Terror

KENTILLA

Kentilla, by Derek Brewster, is for the Spectrum and has multi-word input and graphics. But more thought has been put into this one than many and so it does not merely look pretty, it also plays well.

The plot is that Grako has some grand designs on Caraland, your homeland, and will do anything to get it. As usual, it is you who must get rid of the threat and Grako is a big threat (why, for once, couldn't someone else do the dirty jobs and let me stay at home?).

As you enter Ogeron's humble abode, and before you have time for so much as a jug of beer, he is at you, telling you to take the great warrior Ashika's sword and go to the black tower to crack some heads! Well, he could have offered a small drink just to wet my lips.

Instead I was thrown out with only a sword.

Whilst travelling around Caraland I bumped into some rather nasty characters called Urganuuls whose main interest in life seemed to be cutting great chunks out of me. In the Urganuuls' cave there is a dungeon in which I always ended up. In there is a woman called Elva who decided to join me in my quest once I had figured how to get out. I still blush when I think how simple the escape is and yet for ages I overlooked the obvious!

I next came across the Cavezats who are a nice friendly bunch unless you steal from them. I was lucky and one of them joined me, too. By now I was building up quite a merry bunch of followers.

Oh, by the way, a word of warning. The Cavezats' table manners and food requirements are really far out!

I have not yet reached my objective but very soon, have no fear, I will kill the evil Grako or my name's not the Pink Fairy!

Kentilla is, in my opinion, a very good game and has many problems to keep you coming back in the small hours to solve. The graphics add to the text descriptions very well and make everything more realistic. The puzzles are hard in places, but if a few weeks' hard work does not put you off a game, then you are in for a treat. *Kentilla* is steadily becoming one of my favourite pastimes — let it become one of yours!

Personal Rating: 8

Simon Marsh

VALKYRIE 17

There's a group of ex-Nazis who call themselves Valkyrie 17 who, with the use of a super-weapon they are reconstructing, plan to re-establish the Reich and dominate the world.

You are an undercover agent, out



Valkyrie 17

to stop them, and have traced them as far as the Glitz Hotel, your last lead.

You find yourself in the bar, in the company of an attractive girl, but with no drink and no cash. Leaving the hotel is not straightforward, as the manager has no intention of letting you out of his sight until your bill is paid. But until you do, you cannot continue your search for Valkyrie.

A dossier of top secret documents is supplied with the package and the reverse side of the cassette has recordings of answerphone messages relating to the case — all designed to add to the realism.

Some locations have graphics which are very fast to display and react to the current situation. For example, if you open a window, then it will be redisplayed as open. A number of objects and other points of importance in the game are shown in the picture, without reference in the text, which scrolls underneath. It is therefore quite important to study the picture carefully before deciding what to do next.

Sound also enhances the game, with a tone announcing the completion of certain tasks and another tone sounding when the prompt is returned. Although the display is executed quickly, there is a pause before control is returned to the player, and the actual response time is just tolerable five seconds.

This is the first game from a company called Ram Jam. Does the name mean that the Spectrum's memory is crammed full to overflowing? *Valkyrie 17* is for the 48k Spectrum from the Ram Jam Corporation.

Personal Rating: 8

Keith Campbell

THE WRATH OF MAGRA

This, the latest adventure in the *Thrud Continent* series by Roy Camell, has been much awaited by Spectrum owners.

Imagine you are taken down into a darkened cell, where you see the once beautiful Princess Endora who is chained to the wall. Her face is

covered with sores and she hurls obscenities at you. The evil Magra has possessed her and the only way to rid her of the evil spirit is to find Magra and kill her. Easy, huh?

You start in a village at the bottom of a valley next to the infamous Black Mountains. In the forge you can buy supplies and at the Inn you can get a drink and a meal. A most infuriating location is the graveyard, with a wizard's tomb that seems to be inaccessible. I spent many fruitless hours trying to get into the tomb — perhaps it is not even possible, who knows?

The good ideas behind the plot were, unfortunately, ruined by poor programming and lack of thought. The response to input is very slow —



The Wrath of Magra

with the graphics turned on it is an unbelievable 15 seconds! At least the graphics can be turned off, a pity that the boredom cannot be.

The package comprises three 48k programs and a fairly hefty 158 page *Book of Shadows* full of spells and stories about the Thrud Continent. The game has multi-word input and hi-res graphics, but when will people realise that these things should be regarded as an added extra — the bones of the game are the most important facet? After all, what is the point of buying a car full of all the latest gadgets if the engine is not up to much?

I cannot really tell you if this game is worth buying, as I never came near to solving it. I found it didn't hold my interest enough to give me reason to battle on. That little extra that makes me stay up all hours was just not there. It might be different for you, though. It was not the worst game I have seen, by any means, but I suggest you ask for a demo first, if you are considering buying it, to check that it suits your tastes.

Personal Rating: 3

Simon Marsh

ANYBODY THERE?

Alyson Martin of Burgess Hill was desperate earlier this year! She was stuck in *Colossal* and wrote to C&VG, *Crash*, *Popular Computer Weekly* and *Micro Adventurer*. Was she REALLY desperate, or was she just testing us all out to see if we gave the same answers? Here's a letter I passed on to Simon to answer, and some time later, Alyson wrote back to say: "The only reply I received was from Simon—Thanks!" Which just goes to show you can always rely on C&VG's Helpline!

But there's more! Simon and I took part in a live broadcast of the Radio Sussex Computer Program way back last October and, while I was being grilled by Derek Lockonsh, Simon was having a crack at *Sherlock* in the presence of Martin White, the programme's co-presenter. Alyson listened in to the broadcast, and in her latest letter hoped that Simon had by now progressed far enough to answer some very penetrating questions (that will teach him to volunteer for radio programmes—he only did it for the glory!).

So far, Alyson has proved that one person in particular isn't a murderer — and she is giggling about a plea she read (I won't mention where, but not on these pages!) asking how to prove the person in question is innocent!

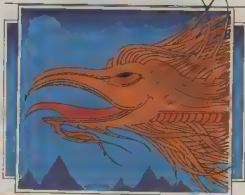
"Great game!" says Alyson, "but elementary it is NOT!"

WHY NOT DISC IT?

"Why do no British companies produce large scale Adventure games using disc access, such as *Zork*?" asks Stephen Watson of Northampton. "Do Infocom have the patent, or something, on the technique?"

Infocom don't have a patent on this idea — it is a standard scenes method. The answer is that the UK market is much less disc oriented than that of the US and wouldn't alone support

HELPLINE



Our readers play a vital part in making C&VG's Adventure pages — they help us to help you by sanding in hints and tips to Keith's Helpline — and often get him out of a few tight corners in a sticky Adventure! Here we take a flick through Keith's Helpline files.

the development and production costs for versions on British micros. But I wonder why no enterprising British software house has produced a top notch disc Adventure for the Commodore 64 which could find a viable market in the US?

CHEAT'S CORNER!

Stuart Plaw of Wolverhampton wins a T-shirt for his clues on *Earthquake* and *Crowley Manor*, together with this underhand method of cheating on an Atari!

If you have a 400 or 800 (not an XL) and leave the Basic cartridge in when boot loading a program, a few games, instead of auto-running, give the READY message.

If this happens, type in the following:
P = PEEK(2) + 256 * PEEK(3)

and press RETURN. This gives the loading address, so now type: FOR I = PTO 99999 : ?CHR\$(PEEK(I)): NEXT I and press RETURN for a sight of all the text. This works on all Jym Pearson's Other Ventures, "but it doesn't always help!" says Stuart.

NOW YOU SEE IT...

I opened the drawer ("you open the drawer") and I examined the drawer ("I see no drawer you can examine"), so I promptly closed the drawer that wasn't there and moved on to better things.

So writes Andy Jennings. Name that game!

FANTASIA DIAMOND

Just how much I needed a certain clue you can guess when I tell you about a recent visit I had from Tim Davey of Thames Television. Tim came along to have a look at the Helpline Database, having it in mind as a subject for the Channel 4 programme *Four Computer Buffs*.

"Play away," I suggested (forgetting he was not from the Beeb!). Tim sat down in front of the legendary Tandy and, while I put the kettle on, he frantically searched for a clue on *Fantasia Diamond*. Yes, he was stuck too! But woe! The clue he wanted was not available!

Leafing through the current issue of C&VG, he

noticed that there was a plea from another, stuck with exactly the same problems! "I'll let you know the solution shortly, then!" I promised, confident that C&VG readers always come up with the goods! Sure enough, you did, and so Paul West of Spalding wins a T-shirt for being the first adventurer to write in with the much needed *Fantasia Diamond* clue! Paul also gets thanks from Tim, as well as from myself, for getting us both out of different, but tricky situations!

You'll find the clue in the upside down section. And you may just be in time to catch the program. *Four Computer Buffs* is due to be broadcast about the time this issue hits the news-stands!

ARE WE LOONIES?

Some time ago I asked if non-adventure players whose eyes happened upon the Helpline ever thought we were a load of loonies, with our desperate problems and seemingly meaningless clues!

Quite a few did, and one such was Colin Smith of Swindon, who writes: "As a former non-adventurer, I can confirm your feelings and indeed expand upon them, as I always found your Helpline the most fascinating part of the whole magazine."

"Determined to find out for myself the appeal of such games, I rushed out and bought a copy of *Questprobe 1*. I had read so much about this mysterious man called Scott Adams. A genius? We would see!

"I was hooked! Even with a head start on the man (I knew all about 'bite lip'), it was near on half an hour before I managed to break out of the dome."

"Now I am stuck..."

So Colin now understands what all the fuss is about and a Helpline postcard is winging its way to him to help him out — only with a clue, mind, since Scott's wrath would be incurred if he ever caught me giving a straight answer...

THANKS FOR THE TIPS!

Thanks for the memories, this month, to Alyson Martin, Dr S Walsh, Neil Cummins of Stockport, Andy Angel of Brandon, Gavin McDermott of Stockport, Andy Jennings of Blackburn, Mark Thompson of Camberley and, of course, ourselves!

GET AN ANSWER?

"Calling all Spectrum Adventurers! How many times have you written to a magazine for an answer to an Adventure problem, never to see your problem dealt with?" writes Mr G A Brewer in a letter which he asks us to publish, offering help to frustrated adventurers. "How many Adventure columns have you searched for the solution to your problem, only to find they answer the parts you know and leave out all the bits you're stuck on?"

"We will send you the answer," he goes on.

Will it all be plain sailing for Mr Brewer? "But of course, at the same time, it would be helpful if you could provide us with information on Adventures you have already solved, or part solved..." he adds. And there's the rub! There's no guarantee you'll get your solution any more than if you wrote to a magazine — and certainly not C&VG!

Well we won't publish your letter in full, Mr Brewer, for it is based on a false premise. Here at the Adventure Helpline, we aim to reply personally to EVERY letter we get — so which magazines have YOU written to? All right, admittedly, the occasional letter loses its way amongst the ever-increasing pile, but it is our proud claim that over 95% are answered. And WE have been at it for over three years!

We would add, in fairness, that Mr Brewer is making no charge but merely asking for a stamped addressed envelope. C&VG doesn't even ask for that — it is all part of the service!

For readers new to C&VG, a short word about who we are and what we are up to in this section may not go amiss.

This is the Adventure Helpline, with myself, Keith Campbell, at the helm and two excellent crew members, Simon Marsh and Paul Copplas, to save me from sinking under a huge cargo of mail! Sorry about the nautical flavour, it must be those seafaring and space ship games we've been playing this month!

We are here to help you through the most difficult parts of your current Adventures. We don't claim to know ALL the answers, but we do reckon to know more than most! If you have a problem, then write to me at Adventure Helpline, Computer & Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Simon, Paul or myself will write back — hopefully with an answer or heavy clue to get you started again. You don't have to belong to a club, or anything, it's all part of the Adventure Health Service.

On the other hand, if we find your problem is one for which we don't have an answer, then it will get a mention in these pages. So if you see a problem to which you know the solution — do please help a fellow

adventurer by writing in with the answer! This will be turned upside down and printed in a later issue for the frustrated adventurer to read! As a bonus, there's a Champ T-shirt going every month for the best tipster! This month, to celebrate this special Book Of Adventure, we are giving them away all over the place!

You WILL get a reply from us if you write: a "thank-you" for a clue, "sorry" if we can't help immediately or — best of all perhaps — a clue if you need one! Found any other Helplines that offer that sort of service? For, of course, we have our imitators.

Do please remember to put your full name and address CLEARLY on any letter you send! So often we have just the answer you want, but cannot reply because you have forgotten to put your name or address on the letter. Don't just write it on the envelope — they get separated from the letters and it is more difficult than the most complex Adventure to try to pair them up again!

One more thing — please be patient! Sometimes we can get back to you within a week — other times, especially in holiday periods, the mail is so heavy that it may take a few weeks!

LATEST LAMENTS

Should you call on the Pickering family of Harlington and find them out, then try looking in a nearby pit, where you will find them stuck but gamely brandishing the *Sword of Hrakel*. Don't pass them by — give them a helping hand!

In a pit of a different kind is Graham Gowland of Middlesbrough. How do you escape from the cratered field in *Temple of Vran*, he asks? But it's the hole 13 feet up that's bugging Andy Jennings. Meanwhile, Graham, an avid player of the *Ket* trilogy, also asks; how do you escape *Final Mission's* slime monster?

How can John Baldwin of Swindon get past the snake in *Dallas Quest*? *Grads in Space* is a little heard of title! John can't forget it though, as he is also trying to find the black globe desired by Arler.

Robert Savage helped with a few clues and in return would like to know how to wake the security guard in *Planet of Death* and how to get the statue in the statue room.

Who can open the door in *Golden Baton* for Russell Grumbley of Sheffield?

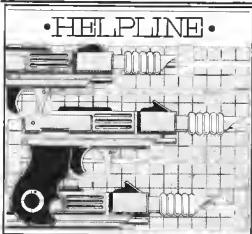
Sinuggler's Cove is a very slow game, complains D Burns of Normanton, who says he can't get anywhere. He's found the barrel and opened it, got the spiked shoes and rope, floated the life belt and munches down the river and "that's about it!"

Where does he go from there, folks? How does he open the rock-fallen tunnel, how does he cross the trench and how can he open the trapdoor?

"Is Dr Strange the Chief Examiner?" asks Paul Wanwright of Billingham. "My friends and I think he is!"

Sorry to disappoint you, Paul, but Dr Strange is to be found elsewhere! Now I wonder who that Chief Examiner fellow could possibly be...

Mick Renshaw of Shetfield, desperate for a T-shirt, has sent in dozens of clues for many games! OK, Mick — you win! But there



is no answer to your problem — how to get past ants. I doubt if anyone can give you one — least of all, Ultron!

Mrs M Gardner and family, from Ashford in Kent, have only managed one move so far — **BREAK SEAL** — in their quest to conquer *Catacombs* from *Interceptor*. "Are we not on the same wavelength or are the commands difficult to word?" she asks. Who can give comfort to the Gardner family?

Alchemy is causing headaches for Carlos Oliveira of Portugal. How do you get any spells? "It must have something to do with the scrolls," says Alchemist player Carlos, "but I can't imagine how...".

I've been put firmly in my place by Andrew Hill of Birmingham. "Last month I wrote to you asking how to manipulate the switch in *Ship of Doom*. You said **PUSH BUTTON**. You murderer! I ended up floating in space having been shot at by a little alien. Gettut night, for Tolkien's sake!"

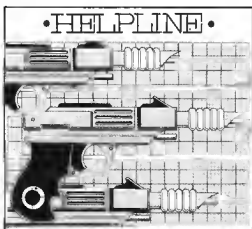
Finally, Old Father Time is driving Matthew Lambon of Manningtontree up the wall. How can he stop the sand of time running out when he picks up the hour glass?

If you have any of these answers, or equally burning questions, do write in to me at *Adventure Helpline*, Computer & Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. We'll take note of what you say and help you to help others!

AND WITH A QUILL!

How would you like to be able to know all there is to know about *Spoff*, *Mindbender*, *Dennis Through the Drinking Glass*? Interested? Good!

So writes G J Rankin, who wins this month's prize for an interesting letter! All you need, he says, is a copy of *The Quill*. Use the **LOAD DATABASE** command on the *Adventure's* machine code file and, in a matter of minutes, you're in!



Mr Rankin can only vouch for the version of *The Quill* he used which is AQ4 as, since he bought it, he says it has been changed slightly. Otherwise, as far as he can tell, any *Adventure* which has been saved using the **SAVE ADVENTURE** option is as vulnerable as an open safe! If it uses a headerless loading, though, forget it! "PS" he adds, "Better keep this quiet. Some Wally is offering a prize for the first person to solve his *Quilled Adventure*!" Well, you know me, Mr Rankin — always the diplomat!

EUREKA! TAKE FIVE!

Kenneth Boyd of Glasgow has discovered a way of playing the fifth part of *Eureka* without having to finish the other four. This is for the Spectrum version: when you are asked a question about the first part, if you press **CAPS SHIFT** and **BREAK SPACE**, it gives the credits for the Hungarian programmers and a few seconds later the *Adventure* starts.

AND SOME FUNNIES

Type **GROVEL** when you meet the nomad in *Pyramid of Doom*, writes Andrew Hird of Matteredsey, whilst Jeff Beck suggests typing **GO TOILET** in *The Count*!

PAINFUL PROBLEMS

What motivates people to play *Adventure* games when they get into problems like those mentioned here? Perhaps the non-adventurer may begin to understand when he reads of Michael Taylor from Bishop's Stortford, who writes about his idea of the perfect *Adventure*.

"Do you really want all that text?" you asked some time ago. Of course we do! "Would you like some graphics?" No! No! A thousand times no!"

Michael goes on to explain that his first love is the plot, and that the prime reason for dispensing with the graphics allows more room for "beautiful, complex and frustrating problems — ones that occupy and torture our minds!"

So we kick off the output from tortured minds this month with a problem from Peter Billington. He is in a control room somewhere, and wants to be able to wake a wookiee and operate a floating chair.

Zodiac player Gary Reason of Bury St Edmunds is trying to open a safe and a vault. Come in all bank-robbers! "... and where are the signs?" he asks in my own facetious way I suggest "On top of the signposts, Gary!" Unless, of course, YOU know different...

"It's a Mythery" is a program of which I haven't

heard before. (I assume it is written in LISP.) Mark Eldridge of Banlodon wants to know how to survive and get to the centre of the labyrinth?

Stephen Kelly of Queen Mary's College Basingstoke has been having problems with *Eureka*. His Commodore version either responds to all commands with **YOU CAN'T DO THAT**, or crashes on him at unexpected moments. So he's only been able to complete 70% of the first game, and 40% of the rest. Anyone else has this problem?

Jess Middlebrook is after some wizard help in *Wizard's Challenge*. What's this — a pyramid with a computer in it? He needs to know which buttons to press, and how to bribe the guard.

Macbeth is getting to David Bollenberg of Preston. What should he do with a dead ship-pilot's thumb, apart from giving it to the cat? It could be a real godsend for tired hitchhikers, David (sucks). He also wants to know how to open the iron-studded gate. "With the other hand!" says I (oh stop it — I mustn't!)

To all knights who say "Nec": Let us *Adventurers* through — we don't know how to avoid being frizzled!

Geoff Davis is now completely blocked by a mutant butcher and a bunch of rats. *Valkyrie* is the name of the game. How do you get past the great barrier in *Inferno*, asks David Lennell?

Wayne Gooderham from Northolt is stuck outside a witch's hovel, and gets beaten to death every time he tries to enter it! He desperately needs **HELP** in *Forest at World's End* from *Interceptor*.

A letter from Terry Mansell of Haslemere gives *Spiderman* his *Helpline* debut. After a whole list of problems, Terry ends: "I know you can't answer all these questions, so do your best."

You can go right off some people, can't you? Anyway, for Terry and other deranged arachnids, look in the upside-down section for a Spider clue!

PLANT OF DEATH
Use the mirror to reflect the torch beam. You'll have to dig.

SANDS OF EGYPT
To fight your way through the ring, then do what comes naturally.
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

WIZARD & PRINCESSES
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

SHIP OF DOOM
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

PRYMEAD OF DOOM
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

SAVAGE ISLAND (I)
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

VENTURELAND
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

HOBBIT
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

CHOST TOWN
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

CLUE AND MESSAGE NO.
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

THE KEY & THE DARK
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

OLD FATHER TIME
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

DEATHWAVE 3000
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

THE EGYPT
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COUNT
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THE EGYPT
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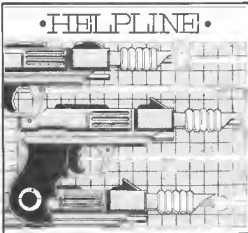
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HELPLINE HINTS

So you don't keep you back issues of C&VG and have now got stuck in an Adventure? You remember there was a useful clue way back in the — well, what issue could it have been?

Or perhaps you are a new reader, not hod the benefit of the Helpline before. end wish you had?

Your worries are over! Here is a complete list of all the Helpline Clues printed in C&VG from June 1983 (when the Helpline first started) right up until the last issue!

Keith Campbell has been loading and chaining together his wordprocessor files, which are carefully archived on diskettes, to bring you this amazing helping of help! It must be the biggest single collection of Adventure clues ever printed! Even Keith was amazed at the size and score of the collection!

But don't worry, there are more to come! These don't even begin to make a dent in his Clues Database — so make sure you buy AND keep future issues of C&VG, the best reference work around for frustrated adventurers!

THE EGYPT
To have an island, drink water. You'll have to dig the ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part. The ring and go up the lower main part.

C·O·M·P·E·T·I·T·I·O·N

WIN

10 ADVENTURE PLANNERS

Essential for the serious adventurer

Have you ever tried to map an Adventure as you play it? You have probably ended up with bits of paper with indecipherable scribbles on them scattered over your front room! But don't despair — the *Adventure Planner* is here!

Print 'n' Plotter products have come up with a simple idea which is a must for every serious

Adventurer or Adventure designer. It's called the *Adventure Planner* and consists of a big A3 (11 x 16 inch) pad which enables the Adventurer to keep a permanent record of a game — or layout that epic Adventure you've been designing for months.

We've got 10 Adventure

Planners up for grabs in our special Book of Adventure Competition. All you have to do is answer the three simple questions below and one of these essential adventuring aids could be yours!

Fill in the coupon and send it to Computer & Video Games, Adventure Competition, Priory Court 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Closing date for entries is March 16th and the editor's decision is final.

THE QUESTIONS

1. Which two Marvel Comic characters have starred in Adventures written by Scott Adams?
2. Who is the author of the book on which the game *Rendezvous with Rama* is based?
3. What is the name of the ex-Monty Python star who created a character now featured in a best selling Adventure?

C&VG/ADVENTURE PLANNER COMPETITION


My answers are:

1.
2.
3.

Name

Address





Announcing an exciting
new development for
Adventurers wherever
they may be.

ADVENTURERS OF THE WORLD- UNITE!

Every month piles of letters from Adventurers all over the world arrive at the offices of Computer & Video Games magazine. Some contain desperate pleas for help, some hold clues and solutions. Others are from readers who have something interesting to say about Adventure gaming in general and take the opportunity to air their views, be they about writing Adventure programs, advice to others how not to write such programs, how to cheat and how to remain sane!

Many readers offer help for others by mail or by telephone or ask to be put in touch with someone who has been mentioned in the Adventure pages. We have always been reluctant to print full addresses and telephone numbers for we suspect that, in many cases, the response would be more than the reader had bargained for, it not completely overwhelming!

In fact, the response to Adventure Helpline has been so great and grown so rapidly that we are not quite satisfied with the service we are giving. All too often a desperate adventurer is in danger of going completely mad before we can get around to offering sympathy and, usually, actual help!

Next month we will be giving you the chance to get help fast, and to contact your fellow Adventurers to offer or request help. We will be announcing the **COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES**

ADVENTURE CLUB and offering **YOU** the chance to join!

But the club will be much more than just a Super-Helpline! We are currently working on some great exclusives for club members which will include:

PHONE-IN HELPLINE SERVICE

Free help and sympathy on-line for members!!!

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

Up-to-date news and information on the Adventure scene. Members' forum and contest column.

Mini reviews of games that didn't find space in C&VG. Special offers available to members.

The Newsletter will be written by Keith Campbell, with help from Paul Coppins and Simon Marsh. YOU will also get the chance to get into print!

MEMBERS BADGE

A quality C&VG Adventure Club Members badge.

ADVENTURE T-SHIRT

We'll have some exclusive Adventure Club t-shirts printed for members to purchase at very special prices!

SPECIAL DISCOUNT OFFERS

Exclusive discount offers on quality Adventure software, books, computer exhibition entry fees, and more!

ADVENTURE CONVENTION

We hope to be giving members the chance to get together along with some of the top names in Adventure gaming!

This is going to be one of the most exciting developments in home computer games in 1985! Don't miss your opportunity to join — order the April issue of C&VG NOW!!

